

THE STORY OF A LION HUNT

ARNOLD
WIENHOLT

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THE STORY OF A LION HUNT





LEOPARD STALKING ITS VICTIMS.

Frontispiece]

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THE STORY OF A LION HUNT

WITH SOME OF THE HUNTER'S MILITARY
ADVENTURES DURING THE WAR

BY
ARNOLD WIENHOLT

D.S.O., M.C.
LATE INTELLIGENCE CORPS

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY
LT.-COL. HUMPHREY WIENHOLT, D.S.O.

SIX DRAWINGS BY WALTER SEED
AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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CHICAGO, ILL.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE CONCERNING THE AUTHOR

My brother Arnold, though born in Australia, was educated in England at Wixenford and Eton. The call of his native land drew him back to Queensland at the age of nineteen, but hardly had he returned, when the South African War broke out, and he promptly joined the Queensland Horse to serve throughout the greater part of that campaign as a trooper. In August 1914, as this narrative tells us, Arnold Wienholt was in Africa crippled by injuries suffered in his lion hunting expedition. Nevertheless he was quickly in harness again, serving till the end of the campaign in British East Africa in the Intelligence Corps, and winning the D.S.O., and M.C. with bar. That my brother was a well-known figure in the East African campaign, and that the enemy stood in considerable respect of him, may be gathered from the following letter, which he received from the German Commander, General Von Lettow, in December 1921 :

(Translation)

“ DEAR MR. WIENHOLT,

“ Your very friendly letter of June has been handed over to me by Mr. Knoop of Bremen,

and I thank you very much that you hold out to me prospects of your publishing a book about the East African campaign. It will interest me in the highest degree to be able to view the adventure from your standpoint; for, naturally enough, my own view is one-sided. It pleases me that you have read my own account with interest, also that you praise so much my conduct of the campaign. From your lips I attach considerable value to such an opinion, for I had heard so much of your bravery and your daring patrols that I felt we were already acquainted to some extent before we met personally in Tuliani.

"The unique nature of our campaign has brought it home to me that we did not keep enough records; and of the records we did keep, we were able to bring only a part with us to Europe. So that, alas! much is lost to us that is both valuable and unique. I am all the more pleased, therefore, that I shall be able to supplement my personal recollections with your book. With deepest regards,

(Signed) "VON LETTOW,
"Major-General."

Von Lettow himself, in his own account of the campaign, mentions how my brother captured and burnt a convoy containing *inter alia* some thousands of pairs of trousers, with the result that the enemy were left trouserless for months.

I have only to add that Arnold Wienholt in

peace is actively interested in Australian politics, and sits in the Parliament of the Commonwealth as a member of the House of Representatives.

HUMPHREY WIENHOLT.



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PART I
PEACE : LION HUNTING



CHAPTER I

EN ROUTE

MANY and various are the things that man sets his heart upon. To become Prime Minister is one man's ambition ; another would win the Derby or the Melbourne Cup ; to hold a championship, be it of croquet or boxing, or any other sport, is sufficient for others. For my own part I have always thought that to shoot a lion was something quite worth doing. From earliest boyhood I had longed to go lion hunting, and had read eagerly every book on the subject that I could get hold of.

In August 1913 I found at last that the opportunity for that expedition to Africa to which I had for so long looked forward was mine. Many of the cattle ranches under my management had been sold, and having resigned my seat in our Queensland State House, to contest a Federal seat against the then Prime Minister, and suffer defeat, I was free for a time from political duties.

My desire was to get away from the common routes of sportsmen, and therefore I determined to try Portuguese West Africa, where, it was recorded, lions were numerous. I decided that the best plan was to travel as far north as I could

by rail, through German South-West, a colony I was anxious to see, and then overland to the Okavango. This should bring me out well to the west of Angola, where I judged game and lions would be plentiful. A young half-caste stockman named Joe Barnett, from one of the Western cattle stations, a good, cheerful boy, fair bush cook, and satisfactory horseman and bushman, accompanied me, and thereby I was saved in the event of accidents from ever being left quite alone.

On arrival at Cape Town I interviewed the German Consul-General, showed my credentials from the German Consul, Dr. Hirschfeld, in Brisbane, and was courteously treated. My object in going to G.S.W. having been explained to the Consul, and meeting with no discouragement, I arranged to journey by the first boat. To the Portuguese Consul-General at Cape Town I also paid my respects.

The fortnight spent in waiting for the German coastal boat, the *Freda Woermann*, was taken up with getting rifles, ammunition, and other things necessary for camp that were not to be left to chance on arrival in G.S.W. A good light tent, mosquito nets and many small articles had necessarily to be specially chosen or made to order. Finally I got a .375 Mannlicher, a .303 Sporting Lee Metford, and a .450 Express (Martini action), all made by Westley-Richards, and at prices decidedly reasonable.

At length the old *Freda Woermann* was ready to start, and though she was but a small boat, the run up the coast was not unpleasant. True, the old *Freda* was a terrible roller. A much-travelled fellow-passenger assured me that a ship could not be said to roll until the trunks came charging out from under the bunks, and even this test was easily passed by the *Freda*.

With the desire to see as much as possible of G.S.W. we landed at Luderitzbucht, the plan being to go right round to Windhuk by rail, and to purchase there stock and plant, and also, if necessary, stores. From Windhuk we proposed to travel by rail to Grootfontein or Tsumeb, one or other of these places to be the starting-point of our trek. Little trouble was made at the Customs, to our pleasant surprise. The special permit from the magistrate required in the case of travellers with more than one rifle was obtained without difficulty, and another pleasant surprise was the discovery that the Customs duties were comparatively light. Luderitzbucht cannot boast of charm, for the sandy and rocky coast is quite bare of all vegetation; but the houses built of stone and cement all look wonderfully solid and well constructed, vastly different from our own wooden township buildings in Australia.

The hotels too were quite good. The town, of course, depends for its prosperity almost entirely on the diamond mines around; a remarkably lucky find for Germany these mines, for without

them the G.S.W. Colony would have been an extremely expensive possession. Through the courtesy of the burgermeister, who held big diamond interests himself, and took a prominent part in the management of several mines, I was enabled to have a good look at the industry here.

From Luderitzbucht the country inland becomes even more desolate than on the coast ; in fact, by the time the diamond field is reached, imagination suggests that the traveller has reached the craters of the moon. The whole surface of the land, that is, the sand, down to the rock, which may be several feet, or only a few inches below the surface, is put through large hand-worked sieves, the big stones and small sand being drafted out. The remainder, perhaps a third, of a size to contain the rest of the diamonds, is from these sieves sent down to the washing mills. There, by a series of washings and concentrations, it is so reduced that the gems can be sorted out on a table by hand. The diamonds are rather small, no big ones have been found, but the quality is good. A large new sifter, to do the work of many hand ones, was then in course of construction, and the entire management of the whole of this field—it could not well be called a mine—was excellent.

From Luderitzbucht to Keetmanshoep was two days by rail, and soon there were many evidences that the colony, plainly a very dry one at any time, was suffering from severe drought. Keet-



"IMAGINATION SUGGESTS THAT THE TRAVELLER HAS REACHED THE
CRATERS OF THE MOON."

manshoep was a pleasantly situated and well-laid-out little township with many good buildings.

Two days more in the train brought us to Windhuk, the capital, where I stayed some nine or ten days. The first morning I presented my papers and was courteously received by the Governor and by the Administrator. Dr. Hint-rager himself was particularly kind and gave me permission to travel quite freely across their north-western districts into Angola. There is a good supply of water in Windhuk, obtained from warm springs evidently of an artesian nature, but the surrounding country is poor, and the small farmers close by who are trying to grow crops or vegetables with irrigation from these springs must have a hard struggle. I completed my plant and stock in Windhuk, with the purchase of a small second-hand wagon, sixteen donkeys, two horses, and two mules, the two latter, as it turned out, being the best of all my purchases.

By good luck, also, I picked up a driver—a Transkei Kaffir called Charlie—a big fellow with a good open face, the real African black, much to be preferred to any native showing a white cross. Charlie could speak a fair amount of English, enough for our daily needs. But he never could grasp the difference between “this” and “that,” and always mixed up those much-used terms. I remember one night, going down the Okavango, we heard the roar of two lions some little way off, and I asked Charlie, who was awake, which side

of the river he thought the lions were. "Master, the lions are *that* side of the river," said Charlie. Next morning, when discussing where we thought the beasts had been, Charlie pointed back to our side of the river. "Why, Charlie," said I, "I thought you said last night they were that side of the river." "Yes, master, this side of that side, master."

In the museum in Windhuk, for me the most interesting thing was the skull of a lion which some time previously had been shot on the Okavango, after it had entered a German military camp at night and carried off a soldier. I heard the details of this adventure from one of the men who had been in the camp at the time.

A body of soldiers, consisting of about thirty mounted troopers, had made their camp one evening close to the river. In the middle of the night this lion had boldly entered the camp in spite of the number of fires about, and, seizing one of the sleeping troopers, started to carry him off. The man thus seized was, like his fellows, thoroughly tired with the wearisome ride through the sand, and did not at first grasp the position, so he merely called out to his comrades to desist from what he thought was their horse-play. However, he was soon thoroughly awake, and when he felt the lion's hairy chest, and sniffed the unpleasant and unusual odour of the great beast, he realised what had happened, and at once he began to struggle violently, yelling out

for help at the same time. His cries roused the camp, and the soldiers rushing out frightened the lion sufficiently to make him drop his prey and disappear. But the following night this same bold customer stalked to camp again, only to be shot when about to seize one of the horses. The trooper whom the lion had seized was badly hurt, but eventually recovered in the hospital at Windhuk. The skull was plainly that of a very old lion, all the big teeth being worn down to almost blunt stumps. In this case it must have been old age and hunger that made him so daring.

In Windhuk the habit of closing all shops and suspending all business from 12 to 3 is remarkable. It may perhaps be a sensible and comfortable arrangement, especially as the weather is decidedly hot in the summer months ; but to an Australian this establishment of the siesta is somewhat startling.

From Windhuk another four days in the train through the changing country brought us to Grootfontein, the terminus of the Northern Railway. Here, while the grasses, though very dry and bleached, still looked sweet and good for cattle, there was absolutely no surface water to be seen. This northern country of German South-West—and indeed the whole colony—seemed essentially a pastoral rather than a farming country ; the total rainfall might be sufficiently heavy if it were spread evenly over the year, but,

as things are, nearly the whole rainfall seems at one time—i.e. during the wet season.

The policy of the Government was to encourage settlement by giving freehold possession. But I think the better plan is to grant long leases of areas of good size at a very small rent, and to reserve the right to resume up to half of these same areas (with, of course, compensation for all improvements made), should it be found desirable later, in the interest of closer settlement. At present the cattle business on purely pastoral lines and in big holdings seems the most likely way in which the colony can get a sound and productive start.

At Grootfontein we got our final supplies for the journey ahead. Two things, however, which were particularly wanted—bells and hobbles—could not be obtained, and the lack of these caused us much inconvenience later on.

It was at Grootfontein that I saw a patrol of some thirty German mounted troops go out on a bushman hunt, two white men, so it was said, having been lately murdered by some of the bush people. The Germans never had the knack of living on good terms with the natives under their rule, for both the Hottentot tribes in the south and the Hereros farther north had rebelled in previous years, in both cases putting up a desperate resistance before being crushed, and now it was the bushmen who were described as giving a great deal of trouble. Throughout the colony, too, the

sullenness and depression of the native population was apparent. The British, no doubt, have had their own difficulties in ruling subject races, and critics can point to risings in India, Egypt, and South Africa against British rule. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Germans were particularly unhappy in their relations with the native peoples of South-West Africa.

When we were told that the roads up to the Okavango would probably be closed from want of water until it rained, there remained just a chance that the road to Kuringkuru by Tsinsabis might still be passable, and we elected to try that road. By making a detour, which took us a few days out of the road, I was enabled to visit several pioneer farms on the way, and to accept the hospitality courteously offered by German farmers.

The want of a few good bullock bells for the donkeys at night was now brought home to us, for twice they wandered away and thereby made us miss the trek for the following day.

Eight days later we were at Tsinsabis ; outside the last farms and with nothing before us but bush to the Okavango. Our difficulties began at Tsinsabis, for we were faced with the prospect of 120 miles of a dry stage without water ; though according to report there was reasonable hope that a little water might be left about thirty-five miles up the road in two big vlees, called Gumtsas and Gumtsaup. This meant a ride ahead to learn the truth of the report ; and so, after fixing up

our camp, I left in the evening on "Tommy," a young grey gelding purchased in Windhuk, to see what the track was like through the sand belt. Not a drop of water was left in either of the big vleys, and it was late before I got back to camp the next evening. Nothing now remained but to wait till some storms should bring water and open the road, and storms were already brewing every alternate day. As a matter of fact, it was nearly three weeks before the first water, on the road about thirteen miles out, was sufficient to enable us to push on.

During the spell at Tsinsabis we shot a fair number of small buck to keep the camp in meat, and there was also bigger game as well, for one morning a beautiful white koodoo cow passed me quite close. The dog I had bought at a German farm, and which we had patriotically christened Dingo, came in useful in procuring partridges for the pot, as when flushed they invariably took to the top of the tree. Joe was a great hand at the partridges. One morning when he returned with two partridges only, though I had thought I had heard him fire three times, I said to him, "What, only two birds, Joe, from three shots?" "Oh," said Joe, "mind one of them was running."

Poisonous snakes were fairly plentiful about here, and an enormous brute—his length must have been at least ten feet—came in pursuit of a species of rat quite close one morning before Joe shot him. It was apparently what is called a



THE AFRICAN PUFF-ADDER.

cobra in Africa : an awful brute with "a head on it like a kangaroo dog." I saw several black Mamba also, very wicked and bad-tempered looking fellows these, and more aggressive than our Australian brown snakes.

My second Cape boy, David, left us at Tsin-sabis ; he had heard of, or had been stuffed with yarns concerning, the danger ahead of us from lions, bushmen, etc., and wanted to go back, which he did, greatly to Charlie's disgust and amusement.

We were off as soon as this first water was on the road ; and by camping the wagon and riding ahead myself with a water-bag to find water, we managed to work up across the former dry stage easily enough. As storms were now falling nearly every day, the latter portion of the track to the Okavango became all plain sailing, although in places there was a good deal of work to be done, clearing the track of fallen timber, etc. Our German axe came in for much hearty cursing from all hands, and I heartily wished for a good British one in its place. With all the talk of late years of British manufacturers dropping behind, I am convinced that British-made articles in many departments of industry are still the best in the world.

The only people we saw all the way to the river were two small parties of bushmen, who bolted with fright immediately they caught sight of us. When we got near the river and were in the

neighbourhood of lions, I was careful to kraal the donkeys with thorn bush close to the wagon every night, and to tie up the horses and mules close to the fire. For as Charlie, who is an authority on donkeys, assured me, "De donkey, master, not frightened for de wolf (hyena), but he very frightened for the lion ; he think the lion no good for him." Charlie also told me that "the snake cannot come on the hot ground, or him brand"—i.e. get burnt.

CHAPTER II

THE OKAVANGO RIVER

BEAUTIFUL was the first view of the Okavango, the great blue river rolling along between green banks. On one side stood the pretty little police station of Kuringkuru, surely the most remote of all the Kaiser's outposts, while across the river was Angola, and the Portuguese post Kuangar. Wonderfully pleasant was the camping by the river-side that night after the long trek through the sand veld, but though we were tired enough, the unusual rippling of the big stream seemed to drive sleep away. It was a typical and glorious African night, with every star showing: a night to lie a-thinking. No matter how vast the number of stars visible, a powerful telescope would bring more and ever more new worlds into the vision. Charlie said he heard the roar of a lion a long way off across the river that night, and I heard the noisy barking of dogs at the Portuguese fort in the early morning.

At the police station there were three German police and about a dozen Herero troopers; also about a dozen mules, but no horses. Received and treated very courteously by the Germans, I

wished I had thought of bringing up mails for them, for I found they had been without news for over five months. During the afternoon I paid a visit to the Portuguese fort across the river, where the Portuguese Commandant also received me very kindly. After the presentation of my credentials, I explained that my plan was to work through Angola towards Rhodesia, for the purpose not only of seeing a new country, but more especially of hunting lions; elephants I had no desire to shoot, and, apart from lions, I proposed to kill only the buck necessary to keep my camp in meat. The Commandant at once gave me full permission to carry out this plan, assisting me further with a letter of introduction to his posts farther down the Okavango. As to any payment in the matter of a licence he simply would not hear of it at all. A thoroughbred Portuguese gentleman, this Lieutenant Duron, the Commandant.

Next day we crossed the river with our whole camp, pulling the wagon to pieces and then floating it over, with our other belongings in canoes, and swimming the stock. This was the first experience of swimming donkeys across a river, and a nice handful they were too. I swam old Billy—my old grey horse—myself, with the two mules following like a pair of big foals. I had bought a team of oxen for the small wagon, as we thought it would be much easier travelling with oxen than with the donkeys. The younger

gelding, Tommy, was swapped in part payment for the team with the German trader from whom the oxen were bought. Tommy was quite a nice-looking horse and had done well enough the principal work—riding ahead to find water in the sand belt—for which I had bought him ; I thought, however, he would be sure to die of horse sickness if taken on with me through the wet season ahead, whereas the trader who bought him wanted him to ride back into civilisation straight away. This left me alone with the one horse Billy, a good sort of old grey, grade Arab : a terribly lazy old slug, but with a wonderful constitution, and although he met with a sad fate later on, he was such an annoying old pig that I fear he never gained any sympathy or became very popular. In fact, Billy was voted “generally beastly” (the common and final accusation of schoolboys when a more specific charge is not available). A couple of Ovambos, a somewhat unattractive-looking couple, were procured at the crossing to accompany us.

That night we camped close to the wagon of a German trader who had come up the river from the Quito. He looked, poor fellow, very shaken with fever, and mentioned that on the way up his best ox had been seized and so badly bitten by a lion that it eventually succumbed from the mauling. This piece of news was decidedly exciting. The next few days, happily spent in travelling down the Okavango, were interesting if

uneventful. Tied neither to time nor to anything else, we just travelled or camped when and as we felt inclined.

So the weeks sped for us—travelling slowly down the beautiful river : drifting down the river of life too, I suppose, without thought or worry, and with the sheer physical enjoyment of being alive that each day brought. In places the track would be quite close to the river, by low banks and flats ; then, as the valley closed in, we would climb long, red, sandy ridges, from which glorious views were often to be seen. Some of our camps on these low ridges were places of real beauty : vast green plains of grass stretching below, and the great river, with its wide overflow lakes spreading through the flats. A few big buck might be seen out on the grassy flats, but to the eyes of a cattle-man there was room for thousands of cattle. There is a story of an old squatter who made a tour in Europe and gazed on the scenery that has become classic for grandeur and beauty. On his return he was asked by a friend : “ After seeing so much of the world, what do you consider the finest sight you have seen ? ” To this the old squatter replied, “ Why, five hundred fat Herefords feeding on a ridge beats everything.”

We passed odd little Ovambo settlements from time to time. I had no difficulty in shooting what meat I wanted on the road, and one morning some reedbuck let the wagon come so close to them that, while still camping on the ground, I shot a beauti-

ful stag from the seat of the wagon, the buck making no attempt to move even when Charlie stopped the bullocks. Wildebeestes and sassaby were fairly numerous also, and I shot an odd one of each kind : there were too many of the native population about for any chance of the meat being wasted.

There came a day when we saw the spoor of four lions. They must have travelled along the track for several miles, after a thunderstorm, and one of the four, it was plain, was a very big male. Numerous were the crocodiles we saw in the river and pools, and the sight of one of these fellows cruising slowly about will discourage the most enthusiastic bather. It was very hot weather, and, but for these brutes, we would have enjoyed many a good " bogey " in the warm blue water. We noted, too, as we began to get down towards the Quito, a good deal of elephant spoor along the frontage, though none of it was fresh ; in one place what must have been a fair-sized herd had apparently been holding a kind of corroboree across the track in the wet.

When the small Portuguese posts of Bunya and Sambia (at each of which two Portuguese white soldiers and half a dozen natives are kept) were passed, we had worked down as far as Diriko, a Portuguese post at the junction of the Quito and Okavango. The fort is splendidly situated on a high ridge, the big Quito river running round three sides of it. I was anxious to cross the river as

soon as possible and get beyond the low-lying flats on the opposite side, for if once the wet season set in, it might mean being detained for months. A Portuguese lieutenant was in charge of the fort, and, with the assistance of his coloured soldiers and a big iron boat, we managed to cross our wagon and belongings without much trouble.

With the stock we had more difficulty, as the currents ran strongly against our side, and it took us three tries to swim the cattle across. The donkeys were more stupid and stubborn than ever, and had to be dragged across, one at a time, behind the canoes. Old Billy I swam across as before, the mules following him like dogs; in fact, it was only by my kicking their noses that they were discouraged from trying to climb on top of the old fellow in the water, so determined were they not to let him get too far away from them.

At Diriko I let my Ovambo boys go home, and engaged some Hereros. These Hereros impressed me very favourably—in fact, I consider them quite the finest of all the native races I have seen in South Africa; big, tall, bony men they appeared to be: not so handsomely made perhaps as some of the East Africans—Zulus or Swazis, for instance—but grim and determined-looking customers; and grim and determined they had previously proved themselves against the Germans. Though very dark in colour, there seems a dis-



GROUP OF OVAMBOS.



HERERO FAMILY PARTY.

tinctly Hamidian strain in the Hereros, and they are never given to joking or laughing in the fashion of the average negro. In addition to those who were engaged to accompany me, another small contingent of native Africans were of our company as far as the last Portuguese fort at Mucusso. I suppose they came with us for the sake of companionship and perhaps for safety, and quite possibly for the chance of plenty of free meat. They all gave a hand with my own boys in making the thorn-bush kraal for the donkeys, and in other work.

On two nights before reaching Mucusso, we heard lions. Once the sound was fairly close to the camp. I notice that stock seem to take little notice of the roar of a lion, the sound apparently not conveying much to them : in striking contrast to the uneasiness and fear which they show with the slightest taint in the wind. Much has been written about the roar of a lion by old and experienced hands, but when I first heard wild lions, my own impression was that the actual noise was disappointing and by no means so loud as I had anticipated. Still, it must be admitted the sound has a peculiarly penetrating and even menacing tone. Even when one is accustomed for months to the frequent roaring of lions, it is impossible to wake up at night and hear the roar without a thrill of interest.

Later on in the trip, when I had picked up enough of their language to be able to talk a

little with my Mombakush hunters, and through them with the bushmen in the camp, we often discussed the habits of lions, and especially when and why they roared. The psalmist of the Bible says that "the lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God," but I doubt if this is strictly true in natural history, since a lion would hardly start his night's hunt by uttering so general a warning. Some of my hunters told me that a lion would roar after finishing a meal, if that was the last of the buck he had killed; but if he had killed a big buck, meaning to return to the same kill two or three nights running, he would only roar after the last and final meal off that particular animal. Perhaps they were trying to "pull my leg." At times I have heard lions make a short, grunting noise, probably to keep in touch when hunting or trying to drive game to one another.

We made fairly good time from Diriko to Mucusso, the last Portuguese fort, and the farthest east outpost in Southern Angola. On the other side of the river is the German mission school, a lonely outpost of the Church, where the mail only arrives once a year, when the wagon goes down to Grootfontein for supplies in May after each wet season.

We camped several days at Mucusso, and I was able to purchase some flour and a few other supplies at the fort. As from now onwards there would be no road or track of any kind, it was a matter

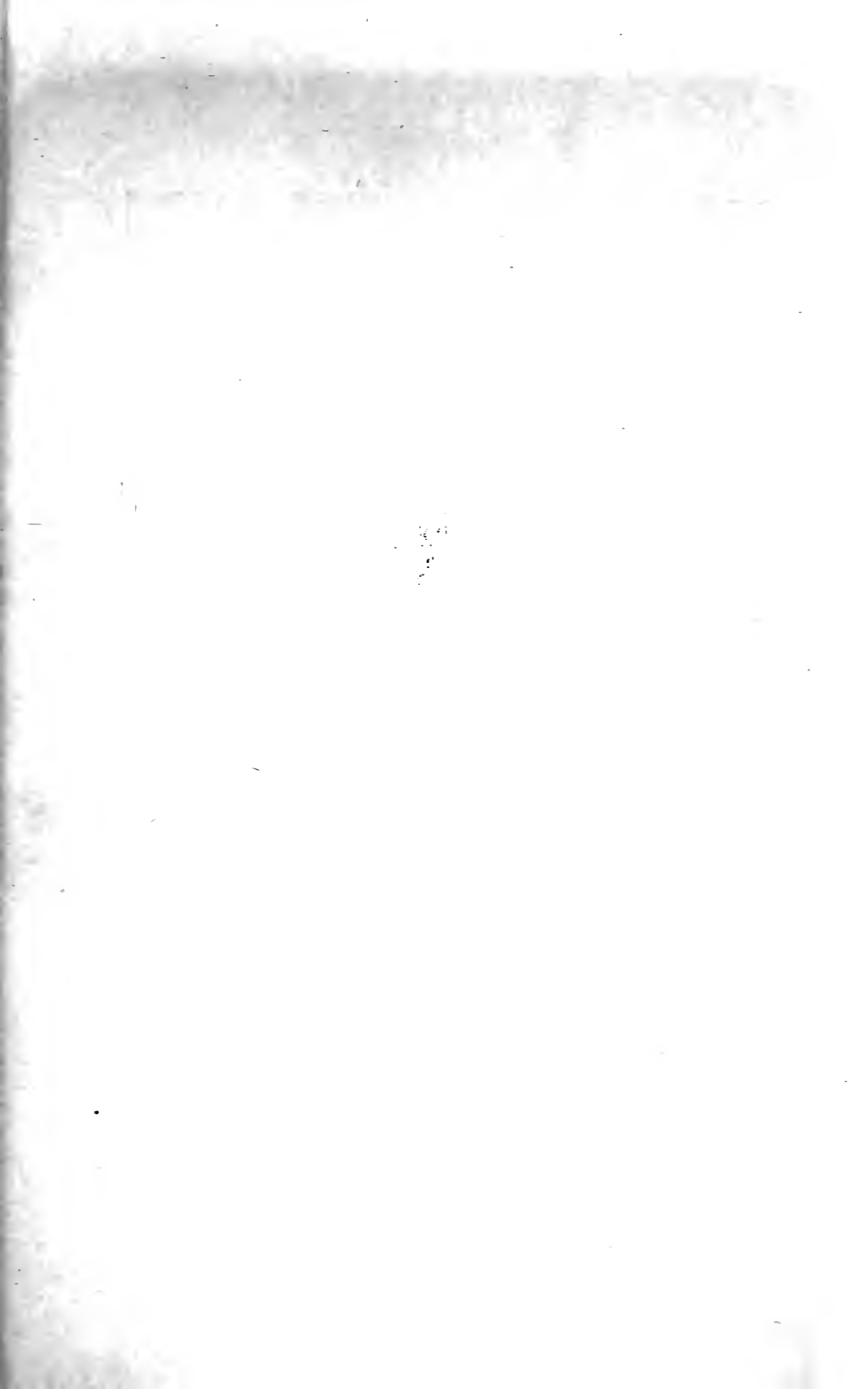


CHEETAHS ON THE TRAIL.



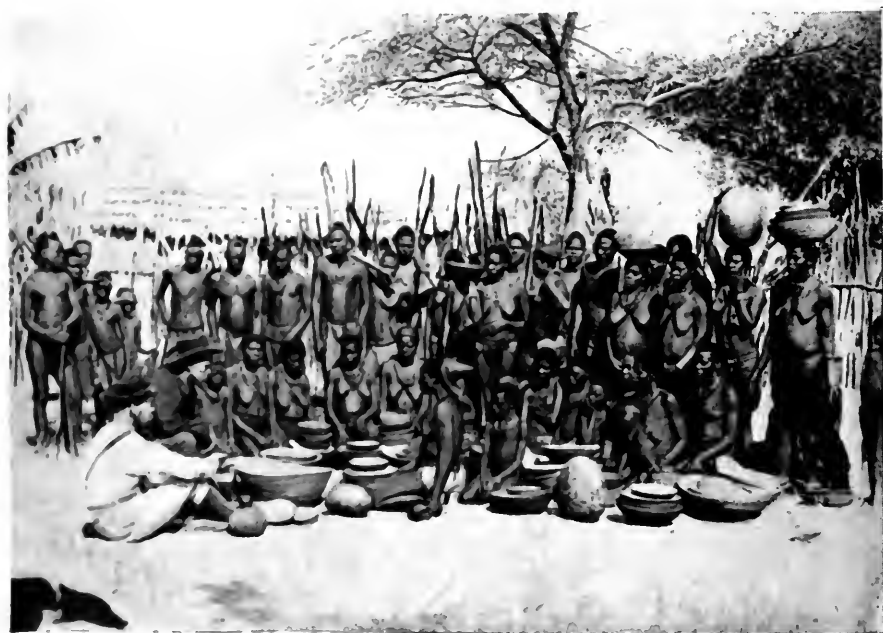
"A LONELY OUTPOST OF THE CHURCH."







GAZELLES.



A DISCUSSION WITH A MOMBAKUSH CHIEF.

of doubt in which direction to strike, which route would provide the most interesting trip and the best game country ; the best game country would certainly mean the most likely place for lions.

Libebe, the principal Mombakush Chief, had his kraal on an island in the middle of the river, and there I paid him a visit. The island is very rich, every yard of it being cultivated outside the kraal itself. Libebe in response came over with about twenty of his retainers to return the visit, and to arrange about supplying me with some boys of his. After we had discussed things, I decided, in spite of hearing that we might find it difficult to get water on the way, to strike across country to the big kraal of the Chief called Mokoya, which was situated on the Luiyanna river, perhaps 100 miles north-east from Libebe's kraal. I was told that we might find lions anywhere in that country, and my own idea was that now the first storms were bringing water in the back country, the game would probably work out that way from the frontages : just as on our far western stations in Australia the cattle after a bad time at once abandon the neighbourhood of the permanent waters directly rain has fallen in the back country. One old Ovambo tried to persuade me instead of going towards Mokoya's to keep down the Okavango, and then strike out easterly from the river, where he said I would find lions very plentiful. He described the latter in true native fashion : pointing to the sun as standing about

eight or nine o'clock in the morning, he imitated the lion, "Whoof, whoof, whoof—neemai!" (the lion); then showing the sun still up in the late afternoon, "Whoof, whoof, whoof," he called out again, "neemai!" (the lion); this was his way of explaining that the lions about there were so plentiful and bold that even well after sunrise and before sunset they are still roaring, and, as Wellington said of the French cavalry on the ridges at Waterloo, "walking about as if they owned the place." However, it was settled that we would work up to Mokoya.

Having arranged for three of Libebe's boys to come with me as far as Mokoya, we made our first camp about ten miles away, where a little local storm had left water in a small vley. There I shot a couple of sassaby, and sent back the meat of one as a little present for the old chief. The previous season's crops in this district had apparently been only moderate, and as the inhabitants were not too well off for food, a large and self-invited family soon collected round me: at one time as many as forty-four persons travelled with me on the chance of meat.

About this time a two days' run of particularly vile shooting occurred, and unaccountably I missed several easy shots at big buck. The waiting and expectant niggers in camp could hear the rifle-shots in the distance, and returning empty handed made me feel more than a little ashamed before the many reproachful and hungry eyes of

the Ovambos : it was as bad as returning to the pavilion after being out for a duck. However, the luck changed, and the white man's shooting reputation was cleared by my very luckily killing stone dead a big old solitary wildebeeste bull at 300 yards. It seems to me that the blue wildebeeste (or gnu), if not quite a true bison himself, must yet have a very close relative in the American buffalo or European aurochs.

Surface water was very scarce on the way across to the Luiyanna, in fact we only struck open pools in three places ; but by digging down about five feet we could get plenty of water in the beds of the big dried vlees, and by making a small trough with an oil sheet we had no difficulty in watering all our stock.

Near one of our camps I found the remains of a splendid bull koodoo who had been killed by a pack of four or five lions. The lions had been drinking at a small claypan close to their kill, but had apparently not found the water in the little pool where we had our camp, for they had travelled on when the claypan went dry. If the koodoo had been found three or four days earlier when freshly killed, there would have been a good chance to get a shot at a lion, for lion spoor was all over the place. The koodoo's horns, a very big pair, I kept as a memento. A German down in the colony had told me of some place in these districts where all the native huts have to be built in the trees, so greatly do the inhabitants fear the

lion. If this were true, the land should be a paradise for the lion hunter, but I "ha'e ma doots" as to its existence.

It was in this district I saw my first herd of zebras on the road and shot a stallion, a horrible thing to do, although of course every scrap of the meat was eaten. Unless actually compelled, I shall never shoot another. The dead beast was a very handsome animal, considerably bigger and stouter than either of my two mules, and very fat. Zebras seem too heavily made and too coarse in front to be able to raise much pace, and this, with their sleepy disposition in hot weather, makes them an easy prey and a favourite food for lions. Compared with the fleet and watchful buck, the zebra must be a simple capture in spite of his splendid, hard-looking legs, with fine bone and big joints: any "horsey" man will understand what I mean. The black and white stripes, extraordinarily well defined and clear cut, are carried right down to the coronet. In a country where horse sickness is so prevalent, it is a pity that these animals cannot be of more use to man; for though the zebra may be only a "donkey with a football jersey on," he certainly is the king of all asses.

On the road across to Mokoya's I struck some old wagon tracks going north, made, as far as I could make out, many years before by a party of trek Boers. It is rather strange that the Boer never took a fancy to the land in this region,

land that was now getting more open, with patches of big open plain. In spite of being sandy, it carried a big crop of grass with plenty of water, obtainable even in the dry season by digging in the vleys.

One morning, whilst looking for a blind ox that had strayed away at night, we made the acquaintance of a little party of four unusual-looking bushmen—tall and dark, quite different from the little red or copper-coloured men in German South-West, or the bushmen whom I met and hunted with later on. Whether it happened that these four merely had a negro cross in them, or whether there is a different race or tribe of bushmen in this district, I do not know. These bushmen, who carried bows and arrows and spoke apparently the usual bushman's clicking tongue, were a little shy at first, but I soon made friends with them, giving one of them my Mannlicher to examine and taking his bow and arrows and pretending to suggest an exchange. They ran up the tracks of the lost ox very quickly and helped to recover the beast.

We went out hunting together the same afternoon, and I was well pleased that I had decided to ride my mule when I saw the way they stalked along. Although we were unlucky and struck no game, it was a delight to watch the savages. The bushman who took the lead, a young fellow of perhaps twenty-one years, over six feet in height and quite dark in colour, with a wonderfully

pleasant and attractive face, was a fine specimen of humanity ; a beautifully made man, with the litheness of the racehorse or the tiger. Even his manner and speech seemed well bred and soft ; the kind of man to make a champion swimmer or boxer, or a second Tom Richardson, yet with hands and arms that an actress might envy. All four walked lightly, and with graceful movements, like highly trained thoroughbreds, and my only regret is that I was unable to have any real talk with them.

All these bushmen tribes are in the truest sense savages, as are our Australian aboriginals. Honey getters, root eaters, and snarers of small game, nothing comes amiss to them, even the remains of a lion's kill, but they toil not, neither do they spin. It must take both skill and pluck to live and to hold their own as these bushmen do, and at times it must often be a hard struggle for them. Where lions are thick and bold, they are dangers just as real to-day to these bushmen as the sabretoothed tiger was to our cavemen ancestors.

Beautiful trackers are these bushmen, the sand with all its footprints being their newspaper, which they read as they travel along. Nothing escapes their notice ; everything is an open book to them. Let them cross the big bullock-like tracks of a giraffe (" Garvie," as they call him), and at once they know all about the big beast : how long ago he passed, and whether he was feeding, or was going fast, or was perplexed and anxious. They

know immediately whether it is worth while to run up the tracks or not.

One morning the savages were extremely amused at my shooting a hawk with an old shot-gun. This bird, a particularly cheeky beggar, kept making swoops at our meat which was drying on a shrub close to the wagons. A yell from Charlie under the wagon at the critical moment of each swoop caused him to shy off the meat like a rusty beast passing you in a stock-yard, but as the swoops became closer and bolder, Charlie complained, "That bird he like the meat, master"; and after yet another swoop, "That bird he come to spoil our meat." So the judicious use of a shot-gun became necessary. When the hawk fell, there was a rush of astonished natives, puzzled apparently on not finding a bullet hole.

About the 14th day from Libebe we reached the Luiyanna at Mokoya's kraal, and after fixing up my camp, I paid a visit to the Chief, or "Capitaine," as they called him. There was something of a Lobengula about the fat old ruffian, who kept up a strict ceremonial, requiring all his men to approach him only on bended knees. Interviews with the Chief were very tedious affairs, and only in a very roundabout way could conversation be carried on. As usual, I asked him if there were lions anywhere about, and tried to get information as to the best route to travel. Mokoya had several modern magazine rifles, including a Lee-Metford and a .375, and, of course, he wanted

cartridges. Now I happened to possess cartridges for both the Lee-Metford and the .375, but as nothing would ever induce me to give rifle cartridges to native Africans, it took a little tact to convince him that all my rifles were English and his German, and that consequently none of my cartridges would be of any use.

At last the old villain sent for another weapon, which proved to be a shaky old No. .12 shot-gun, and as I had plenty of shot cartridge with me, I gave him two boxes of twenty-five each. This pleased him immensely, and in the evening he sent me down all the grain I wanted for my boys, and also a very acceptable little present of a calabash of honey. As I had decided to keep down the Luiyanna river as far as a place called, as I thought, Mafoota (though later I found it was the name of a white man and not a locality), I only stopped one day at Mokoya's.

Storms now set in every few days, and it was evident that the wet season we had been expecting had begun. There was a fair amount of game as we worked down the river, but I think most of it was then moving back towards the vleys, which were getting filled by these storms. In many places there was a profuse display of wild flowers, very pretty to ride through, especially a kind of big pink daisy, and in the higher country a large red flower, something like a fox-glove, which the bushmen called "am'deava." I used to gather bunches occasionally, if only to adorn the cheek

straps of my old riding mule. The mules had turned out a good purchase, for they had kept their condition well, had weathered the horse sickness, and were quite passable enough for riding after game or for riding ahead in search of the best way for the wagon to follow. Still, it is impossible to get fond of a mule as we get fond of a horse, the mule being neither "flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring." The dismay of a hen hatching out a brood of ducklings must surely be equalled by the anxiety of an old mare at her long-eared, half-neighing, half-heehawing progeny.

During the whole eighteen days we were working down the river to Mafoota's, we neither saw nor heard any lions, nor indeed met a fresh lion spoor. Joe was suffering intermittently from fever, so we travelled slowly. We met and made friends with two or three small parties of bushmen on the way down. One morning I shot two koodoo, but one of them was only wounded, clumsily enough, in the fore-shoulder. I had only a young bushman boy of about fifteen years with me at the time, but he ran the trail for fully three hours ahead of me, and finally the poor brute worked round close to my camp again. After some lunch and an hour's spell, picking up two other young bushmen and again taking up the spoor, I got another shot late in the afternoon, and finished the wounded animal. Apart from the satisfaction of not having let a wounded beast go, it was an interesting business watching these three red

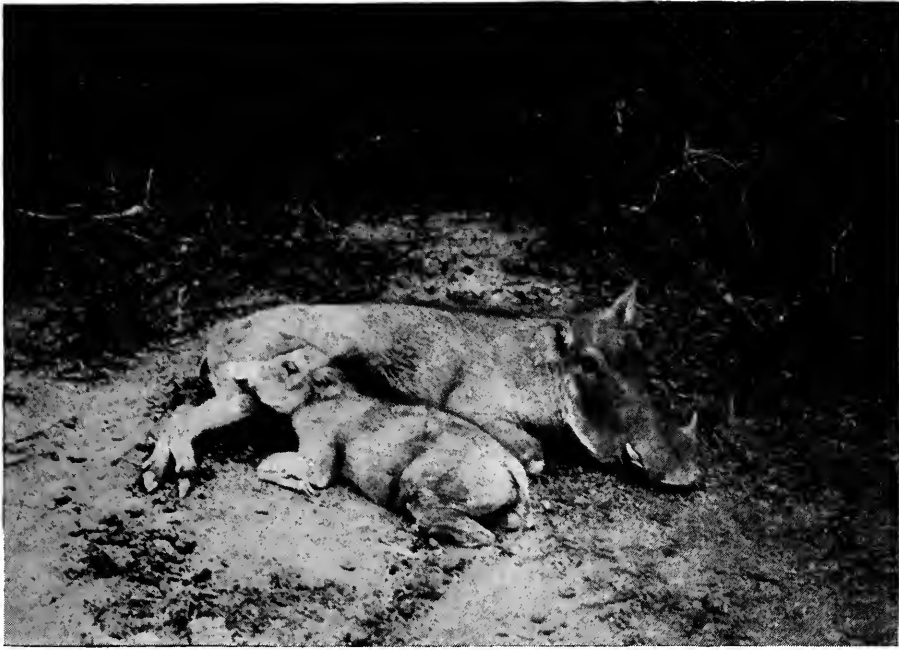
human bloodhounds at work. It would be by no means so interesting to be hunted by them.

A fair number of hippo were in that river, and for a long time one afternoon I watched two of them in a smallish isolated pool. When just the head shows, the hippo resembles a big draught horse swimming, and after seeing them it was easy to understand how they got their name "river-horse." Beautiful is the command they have of the element in which they are so much at home!

But I am afraid I became unpopular with a small local faction of the inhabitants when I left the hippo unmolested.

In places along the river there were a lot of giraffe, and what pantomime animals they are! They must be seen in their wild state to be appreciated fully as the freaks they are. When disturbed they seem to start galloping in three parts, the neck going one way, and the front and hind legs galloping, apparently out of step with each other. Every minute it looks as if they would fall over or break their necks in the trees, though, as a matter of fact, it would take a smart horse to catch up with them. To the Mambokush, a giraffe, I think, represents absolute perfection in the game line: a big mass of meat, with plenty of oily fat, and, above all, no danger or risk in the capture of these most harmless of animals.

The native Africans are certainly not sportsmen. Their word for buck is "nyamma" (meat), and



WILD SOW AND YOUNG.



HIPPOPOTAMUS.



when pointing out a buck they always use the one word "nyamma," "nyamma." My hunters could never understand what the object was in wanting to shoot lions, and at different times they assured me, "Morena, neemai badiko nyamma, badeka nyamma, morena"—"Master, the lion is not meat, is no good for meat, master." I think their astonishment finally reached its height on the day an old lion skin was proudly brought into camp by some natives who wished to sell it to me. On my explaining to them that, as I had not shot the lion myself, the skin was of no value to me, and that I did not want it, they were utterly mystified. Probably they were thinking, "He does not want the meat, and now when he can get a skin without any trouble or danger, he does not want that either. What in the name of goodness can he want? Truly the ways of a white man are mad and inexplicable!"

We were now nearing the far south-east corner of Angola, moving towards the point where "three Empires meet," for North-West Rhodesia, Angola, and German South-West Africa all meet at a point somewhere below the confluence of the little Luiyanna with the Quandoo river. It was before we reached Mafoota that we suffered the loss of old Billy—"Billy the pig," to give him his full title. In spite of being tied up all night close to the wagon, Billy had been getting fatter than ever, though only eating grass, and it was but the evening before he died that I remarked to Joe, "I

wonder after all if this old fellow is going to prove immune to horse sickness; he has never looked better." At daylight next morning, however, when I let him go to feed around the camp, for the first time since we had had him Billy would not start eating, and by the time we were ready to move off camp, the old horse was puffing hard and evidently had the sickness. Before we had gone a quarter of a mile the poor old chap was too bad to lead. I knew that he was such a crying and whinnying old brute when left a moment alone, or apart from the mules, that if he possibly could he would follow of his own accord; but when the bridle was taken off him he lay down very sick. Still, when he saw the wagon and mules gradually leaving him, he got frightened at being left behind. Three times he made a gallant effort on his own to struggle up, the third time just succeeding. Slowly and gamely the old horse came pottering along after the wagon, but gradually fell behind and was lost to sight, a grey dot in the distance.

We only made a short stage of a few miles and then camped, half hoping that the old grey would come crawling into camp. In the afternoon boys were sent back to report how old Billy was, and when they found him he had already been dead some hours. Lying right on the track, he had followed as far as he could. That night we heard the hyenas howling his requiem in the distance.

What an appalling thing this African horse sickness is! It does more than anything else, I think, in Africa, to check progress. From the pastoral point of view especially, it is a frightful drawback. As a cattle-man accustomed in Queensland to plenty of cheap and good horses, I cannot see how any of the country in Southern Africa can be successfully developed till this cursed horse sickness is stamped out or cured. No cattle will do well unless they have a free run, can feed and water when and where they like, and are able to withdraw to the ridges in cold weather. To be compelled to kraal cattle regularly every night is not only to encourage disease, but to make it impossible to expect any satisfactory result. But then if cattle are given the necessary freedom, they naturally become too lively or too flash to be handled on foot and must be worked with horses. All the cattle countries of the world—of course, I am speaking from a ranch or pastoral point of view—and especially the Argentine, Western America, and Australia, have, as a necessity, a plentiful supply of good horses, for without such a supply the cattle could not be economically worked.

About the eighteenth day we reached Mafoota's, where I had the pleasure of meeting Mafoota himself—otherwise Mr. W. Keys. He has made his home on a red sandy ridge overlooking the Quandoo, a beautiful though lonely spot on the edge of the Sepango forest, a forest that consists

of very light, open scrub intersected by waste spaces. It was pleasant to have a good yarn with another white man again, and especially with Mafoota, an old African pioneer, with great knowledge of the country and its peoples. Mafoota (the native name comes more easily than the English) told me that at the time when his camp was farther up the river, he passed three years without seeing a white face. From him I learnt also that quarantine regulations would prevent me taking my stock through either Rhodesia or the Caprivi Sipra ; information that decided me to strike west again and make a settled camp somewhere for a month or so ; by which time I judged the wet season ought to be over.

After sending a few boys across to Livingstone to bring back my mail and a few other necessities, we fixed our camp twenty-five miles west of the Quandoo. No sooner was the camp fixed, than the wet season started with fairly heavy rains, and a chapter of accidents opened that gave us rather a bad time. Both Joe and Charlie went sick, and then I fell ill myself through foolishly riding all day in the wet in search of some missing stock (the boys having lost a lot of the oxen and three donkeys) when I was already feverish. Joe and Charlie soon got right, but my recovery was a hard struggle, and it took me about seven weeks to pull through. The most difficult part was the effort to keep a grip on oneself mentally, and so escape becoming delirious. I remember one

evening, when the boys were trying to catch the mules, and the said mules—all with their bells on—were running about between the tents, being greatly worried by an almost overwhelming feeling that the thing I ought to do was to crawl to the door of the tent and shoot the bells off the mules as they ran past.

Misfortunes never come singly, and a strange native, seeing one of my mules in the long grass some distance from the camp, stalked it and shot it with an old Portuguese muzzle-loader under the belief it was "nyamma"—eland or something, I suppose. He had never seen a mule before and knew nothing of my camp. It was maddening, this loss of a good riding mule; but the poor devil of a native was terribly distressed, and there was nothing to be done. There is an element of humour in the accident, though at the time I completely failed to see it. Along the vleys near this camp, wild duck, evidently migrating from the rivers in the wet season, were in abundance; and very good eating, too, they proved, as also did the big black and white geese, when not too old.

As soon as I was sufficiently recovered from the fever, the camp was moved back again towards the Quandoo, about seven or eight miles from Mafoota's. I found I was now reduced to riding an ox, as the only mule that remained had got a terribly sore back after Charlie had ridden her for a day. However, the little black ox which

became my chief mount was very much better than nothing, for I was not yet strong enough to walk more than a mile or so at a time.

One day I got a grand eland bull, luckily quite close at hand, and so big that it took two pack-ox loads and eleven boy loads to bring the meat into camp. Its dressed weight could hardly have been less than 1,100 lb. This eland meat was enormously fat, especially on the brisket, but yet was not at all coarse. In fact it was exactly like that of a big prime bullock, and, in my experience, the eland is by far the best buck meat there is. The eland can, perhaps, claim to share with the moose the sovereignty of the deer tribe.

The health of Joe and my Kaffir driver was poor at this season, and as both men seemed very homesick and in low spirits, I decided to send them to their respective homes. Their going left me quite alone in my camp, save for my local boys, and the solitude, of necessity, made me begin to pick up more quickly the native language. As a matter of fact, I particularly desired to master, at least to a slight extent, the bushman speech, that extraordinary though not altogether unmusical language of clicks.

The weather was by this time glorious, the nights cool and the days warm and bright. The grass was drying very rapidly, and I was able to burn patches in the neighbourhood of my camp, so that the early green spring in the grass might bring the buck on to the freshly burnt feed near



RIDING OX.

my camp. Gradually, too, I was getting stronger and recovering from the effects of the fever.

A native hunter named Tatello visited our camp during my sickness, and volunteered to show me, on my recovery, where lions were plentiful—a somewhat unusual incident, as the inhabitants of those districts generally did not share my enthusiasm for the particular game we were seeking. However, I told Tatello that when I was strong enough, and had got the stores which were expected from the Zambezi, I would be prepared to go out on a hunt with him on the strict understanding that as far as he was concerned it was to be a case of no lions, no pay.

We were hearing lions quite frequently about this time, and, in particular, two had passed my camp one morning grunting in daylight, whilst I was away in another direction. There were also a fair number of that beautiful and graceful buck, impala, in the neighbourhood, and I shot several good stags. As we were then being visited by crowds of natives, many of whom came to trade with grain, pumpkins, etc., and held nothing more acceptable than meat, I shot occasionally an extra buck over and above what we needed for the modest requirements of our own little camp.

These weeks of steadily returning strength and the awaiting of expected stores passed very pleasantly. Now and then I would drive my own team of oxen for a load of wood, though Mafoota,

to whom I sometimes gave a lift, would always rudely insist on getting out and walking when we got in amongst the timber.

With increasing knowledge of the language, it now became more interesting to talk to my boys—who never could be got to understand why, as I had told them, there was no game in my country (Australia).

“Badeko hefu (no eland) ; badeko thovoo (no wildebeeste) ; badeko lefoouu (no sassaby) ; badeko mapi (no deiker) ; and badeko fumbo (no sable) ” ; but when I reached “badeko fumé” (no rhinoceros), there was a chorus of astonishment and surprise, and “badeko fumé,” “badeko fumé” resounded : though why they thought it particularly wonderful that there were no rhinoceros (of all things) in Australia, I cannot imagine. When I started to make a little vocabulary of Makwengo (bushman), the spelling on particularly phonetic lines gave curious results. Hyena, for instance, I could only best put on paper as “oooo,” a case, I think, of onomatopœic spelling.

Old hands sometimes deny the bushman any keen sense of humour, but the natives of these parts could certainly enjoy a joke. Once, being intently watched by some twenty natives whilst sitting on top of the wagon, I pretended, after appearing to examine my discarded trousers (which, though old, had not yet reached the “given away” stage), to pitch them away. With one bound the whole mob of spectators leapt forward

in the direction to which I appeared to be throwing the coveted garment. The laughter that followed when they found the trousers had not really left my hands was, if disappointed, quite good-natured.

Another day, having shot a sassaby, I fastened the horns (which I had chopped off) under the bridle on the mule's forehead, leading her back to camp with this unnatural growth. This, too, seemed to tickle the camp followers as something particularly funny.

A third instance : Amongst my boys there was a harmless lunatic. Mafoota, on a visit, caused considerable laughter by saying, " I notice your staff now consists of three men and one baboon."

I confess to a liking for these savages who have never yet been spoilt by civilisation and are still really children in most ways. What a happy disposition they have, and how few things seem to worry them ! After all, the savage is fairly near the surface in all of us, and primitive instincts are still the basis of everyday life. Who is there that does not like honey ? Does a woman ever look better than when she is wearing furs ? I have read of a multi-millionaire who, when asked at the end of an interview by a reporter, " Now, Mr. So-and-so, may I ask you what you find your greatest personal pleasure ? " replied, " To sit in front of the fire in my bedroom with my clothes off." Anyone who has knocked about the world, enjoying the good times and enduring the hard,

experiencing, in short, something of many sides of life, realises that there is only a difference in degree between the ten-course dinner at a luxurious hotel, and a plain meal of cold corned brisket, fresh damper, and a pot of tea. (Personally I much prefer the latter.) The sum of life's happiness remains whether we live in a stone mansion or in a comfortable weatherboard cottage ; whether we are adorned with a frock coat and bell topper, or clad in a soft shirt and moleskins. What does matter is the absence of a sufficiency of good food and clothes and of a comfortable home. There should be opportunity, too, for pleasure and relaxation, for it is not well that life should be one continual grind of labour.

Further, it is well to feel that one's children will have such education that, should opportunity offer, and their characters are equal to the burden, they may hold even the highest positions in the State. Perhaps, above all, it is good to know that in case of sudden death or accident, neither wife nor children will be left totally unprovided for. I think that any young man by the time he is twenty-five (quite apart from any particular gift of brains or other possessions), as long as he is a worker and not a drunkard, should be in a position to marry the right girl if she will have him, and enjoy life with her in happiness and comfort. These are some of the things that seem to me of real importance, and I believe that in Australia our ideas and politics will yet follow the lines of

sturdy individualism rather than of Socialism. For Socialism, even if it were possible—by first killing individual effort and personal spirit—would soon bring national disaster at the hands of some more vigorous power.

At last the long-expected supplies came, and we had a three days' trip down the river and back in canoes to get them. Everything was now ready for a start after the lions. It was decided to hunt for a couple of months west of the Quandoo, and then to work in towards the Zambezi, with the hope that on the way we might meet Mr. Venning, the Native Commissioner at Sesheke, and with him try the pools known as M'gwezi, this side of the Zambezi, where lions were said to be pretty plentiful. Leaving the camp about the middle of July in charge of my little boy Sangallegwa and two smaller piccaninies, I started out west with Tatello, three other hunters, four bearers, and two young boys.

We worked back towards the Okavango, but it was some seven or eight days before we began to find many signs of lions. Game was plentiful, and there was no difficulty in keeping our camp in meat; by shooting an extra buck or so, in particular one very big eland bull, we had no trouble in procuring what grain was wanted from the scattered Mombakush kraals in exchange for meat and fat. I had made friends with a little party of bushmen that we came across, by shooting a wildebeeste for them, and I took two

hunters from amongst them who rejoiced in the names of Qumano and Boombo respectively. In both these men the Mongolian type was evident, while the younger bush children are very pretty and very like Japanese babies.





"LEX TALIONIS."



THE GEMSBOK.

CHAPTER III

NEARING THE LION COUNTRY

WE now began to find fresh lion spoor about, and in one place the bushmen ran for a short way up the tracks of a giraffe that had been chased by a lion—the tracks of both galloping animals being plain even to a white man. The giraffe had been “scratching gravel,” yet I doubt a single lion holding or killing such a big beast as a giraffe. Perhaps he had chased it more out of play than anything else. Two or three times we had run up fresh tracks only to lose them, but it seemed we were getting closer to some sport.

Whilst hunting round for fresh lion spoor one morning, with little Qumano in the lead and some other hunters, we came quietly on a great bull eland standing under a tree in a little open patch. Qumano was at once all tension like a pointer. Getting off my mule whilst the boys squatted on the ground, I sat down to watch the noble fellow. As we already had sufficient meat for some days ahead, there was, of course, no wish on my part to molest him ; so after enjoying the sight for some time, I mounted to ride on. Poor Qumano could

not believe his eyes when he understood that I did not intend to shoot the eland ; his expression of horrified astonishment and disgust at thus seeing meat and fat in the shape of a huge buck being left on the veld was really ludicrous, and I should like to have been able to translate what his excited chatter meant. My boys never could understand the pleasure I took in merely watching, without any desire to kill, the big buck. On this last trip in particular I fear I got into bad odour with my hunters for stalking close up to and watching a little herd of giraffe without shooting one. There was a magnificent bull in this particular mob ; a still prettier sight was a cow with a quite small calf at foot, the tiny fellow striding alongside his mother like a little thoroughbred.

At last, one morning before sunrise two lions began to approach the camp, or rather, I expect the vley, some 100 yards or so away, keeping up a continual and steady roar. I used to camp generally fifty or sixty yards from my mob of natives, with, of course, a fire of my own. It was necessary to get some distance from them, as they always kept up a continuous chatter half through the night. Between my fire and the various fires of the boys we used to tie, for safety, the old mule and pack ox. I was lying awake that night listening to the noise of the lions, which seemed to be coming steadily nearer, when my little cook boy, Secumba, came running across to where I was lying (I took

no tent on these expeditions), crying, "Moraina, moraina?" ("Do you hear the lions?"). He spoke in his own language, for in these parts not a word of English is known. "Yes, Secumba," I said, "I can hear the lions."

Now, it was Secumba's duty always to keep my big enamelled billy full of water, so I added, "But, Secumba, I think the bucket is empty." It was quite dark and the water was some way off and that unpleasant moaning noise was getting closer and closer, so Secumba evidently thought my little joke in bad taste; but a very sickly grin came over his face, and he, making up my fire, returned to his own without any reference to the state of the water supply.

These lions seemed to turn back before they came to the water, though they continued roaring as they drew away. After an early breakfast, taking the two bushmen and other hunters, we set off to try and pick up and follow the trail of our last night's visitors. A hundred yards behind the vley Qumano picked up the tracks, crossing a bit of newly burnt country, and the pleasurable excitement of following up two big male lions, as they appeared by their tracks, now began. My hunters told me that these lions had not killed anything during the night, and on my being somewhat sceptical, they referred me to Makwengo. These little men, however, only confirmed the same opinion, "Ambi kocho—ambi kocho" ("no meat"), for when it came to a dispute on the

matter of tracks, etc., a bushman's verdict was final, even with the other natives. It was a long walk following the spoor, travelling fast where the sand was fairly heavy and the tracks plain, but losing time when we got amongst thorn bush or on the harder white sand and ant-bed country. There was a feeling as of electricity in the air when the tracks became very fresh, and even the little mongrel Kaffir cur of Tatello felt this; for, when my leg once brushed him unexpectedly, he jumped sideways, doing it so comically, with a frightened yap, that we all burst out laughing, the boys seeing the joke too. The younger bushman, Boombo, always took the lead when the spoor was straight ahead, going quickly, his eyes glued to the ground. I followed him and the remaining boys in a line behind. If he got checked, then Qumano and the others would help to pick up the tracks again.

After a while we came out suddenly on a more open patch, with a thorn-bush scrub on our left and a little patch of bush around an ant bed straight in front. We were quite close up to the ant bed, Boombo with eyes on the ground, when there was a quick, excited chatter from the boys behind. I turned to see them all excitedly pointing to something directly before us, and at that moment two splendid big male lions appeared, doubling back into the bush with a "whoof, whoof," the half-angry, half-frightened noise a lion makes when suddenly surprised. Of course,

the boys bolted immediately ; Boombo simply disappeared.

This was my first sight of wild lions, and I fear, though it is unpleasant to make the admission, that I must have been a little excited also. I had two very close, though necessarily quick shots, one at each lion as they broke across the open patch one behind the other, but hit neither. I felt certain afterwards that had they been two big buck instead of lions I should have killed them both. We burnt the two lions out of their patch of bush with a fire, and later on burnt them out of another patch as well, but in both cases they broke on the side opposite to which I had posted myself. Thus we never caught sight of them again, and finally, getting into a patch of thick bush where the grass had already been burnt, and having no dogs, we were forced to leave them. Airedales have the best name for this sort of work, but I am looking forward on my next trip to taking with me some Australian cattle dogs to see how they shape : I think they should be just the thing. No dog with a bull strain in it is of much use, for its nature inclines it to make a rush on the lion, which means inevitably a sudden end.

The dogs are wanted simply to tease and attract the big beast's attention ; moreover, at night a camp is not really quite safe without a dog. A good pack of dogs would have made all the difference to us on this expedition, and I had counted on picking up some in German S.W. ;

but they were simply unprocurable there, and the boys that I had sent in earlier from the Quandoo to try and bring out a collection of dogs (I had written to agents in Livingstone asking them to procure such a collection for me) were so frightened when they reached the Zambezi, that they fled to their kraals without telling me. It is not, of course, every dog that cares to face or bail up a lion, or even follow the scent.

I felt delighted that at last I had seen wild lions; they seemed bigger and darker than one had imagined. It was satisfactory too that the plan of following up their tracks with these bushmen was turning out so promising a way to get some sport. At the same time I was horribly vexed with myself for having shot so hurriedly and badly.

On the following night I heard a solitary lion grunting in the distance; the boys said that later on—after I had fallen asleep—he passed quite close. However, through some mistake or dispute, we did not manage to cut his tracks next morning. Accordingly we shifted camp some miles south to the neighbourhood of a little kraal called Lekasi, and I shot a sassaby in the evening. What beautiful buck they are! It is not to be wondered at that Frederick Selous, that mighty hunter, counted them as belonging to the fleetest of all buck. They seem made for pace, with a lean, thoroughbred-looking head, beautiful sloping shoulders, and high withers; while the somewhat

drooping hindquarters and finely turned hocks must all help to give them their great speed. Graceful movers, too, they are when travelling fast. If one could only breed such a racehorse, what a flyer he would be !

CHAPTER IV

AT GRIPS WITH THE LION

TAKING Qumano and a few other boys with me next morning, we started a look round, though no lions had been heard during the night. Two miles from the camp we hit some fresh spoor, and this, after examination, was reported to me as being that of three lions who had gone that way during the night, and the word was at once given to take up the track. It was not easy country to follow the spoor in, but eventually we found a place where the lions had pounced upon and killed a young two-year-old wildebeeste. According to their custom, the lions had dragged away the offal and scratched sand over it, the carcass itself having been removed and eaten close by. Hardly anything remained except the hide, with the bony part of the legs and skull attached to it, and Qumano proudly cut off the miserable hind legs above the hocks and transfixed them on his little spear. In vain I tried to explain to him that there were heaps of meat at my camp, that his carrying such a prize was surely a slur on his master's commissariat, and that he would make me indeed appear a "hungry master." The

little bushman was bred in a hard school of "waste not, want not," and stuck to his meatless, lion-slobbered hocks.

We soon found that the lions had been camping quite close to their kill, and on hearing us had galloped off, as their tracks showed. Taking Qumano with me, and the other boys following, we started again on the track as hard as we could, the spoor leading through light sand where the tracking was good. After about a mile or so we got our first glimpse of the lions on the move, perhaps a quarter of a mile ahead. I now took Tatello alone with me, and telling the others to follow well back, we set off in the hope of catching up the lions. As we followed them, we had glimpses of them from time to time, ahead between the broken bush, half walking, half jogging, their heads held somewhat low, for all the world like three huge mastiffs. They seemed anxious, and at times would stop and look back over their shoulders. Finally, when I judged we were nearly parallel to them, I ran up alongside a big ant heap.

The lions were now crossing a bit of open country ahead at possibly 400 yards distance from me, a big male in the middle with two lionesses; they were all on the move and I made up my mind to have a shot at the lion while I had the chance. My bullet hit him hard, knocking him right round, and thereupon he gave a violent display of bad temper, tearing up the ground, staggering about

and roaring, his tail straight out behind him. He behaved, in fact, just like an ill-tempered buck-jumper finishing up an unsuccessful set-to. I thought, "I should not like to be too close to you, my boy," but little imagined the same big rascal would so soon be on top of me. The two lionesses had halted immediately and were both staring hard at me, or rather perhaps in the direction whence my shot had come, for it is doubtful if they could have seen me. Except for throwing in another cartridge, I sat quiet.

The lion's performance having carried him behind a little broken tree, which prevented me getting a second clear shot at him, I refrained from firing at either of the lionesses lest I might have a second wounded beast to manage. Presently the lion himself worked more into the open and I got a second shot at him, but my bullet merely passed under his stomach, throwing up the sand between his four feet. At this all three cleared off immediately in different directions into the bush, and to my disgust the big fellow appeared to move as briskly as the others. The rest of the boys, having heard the rifle shots and the roaring of the angry lion, now came up, and Tatello described in true native fashion the whole performance to the new-comers, showing off the actions of the principals concerned.

I had an unhappy feeling that about the worst thing that could have happened had really taken place, and the absence of all enthusiasm on the

part of the boys when I prepared to follow up once more the track of the lions fully confirmed the idea. The ground was scratched and blood-stained where the lion had been hit, and we followed up the spoor very carefully. The lion, we found, after moving about 200 yards and being evidently pretty sick, had then laid down underneath a bush, leaving a pool of blood where he had stopped.

It was rather dangerous and ticklish work I felt, and a good pack of dogs was badly needed. The faithful Dingo had disappeared one night a month or two before, probably taken by a leopard, and I had been unable to get any others. The boys were frightened, but still kept together pluckily enough and slowly followed the spoor. Qumano, however, had evidently shot his bolt; he drew the line at following a wounded lion, and he is not to be blamed, for nobody knows more about a lion than these little wild men.

The spoor now showed that one of the lionesses had come in and joined her wounded companion, and when the double spoor presently took us into a nasty thick piece of thorn-bush scrub, I decided, in accordance with my boys' views, to leave the lion for that day and to pick up the tracks again next morning; we thought that by that time there was every chance that we should find him dead.

So, leaving the spoor, we made our way back to camp, which was not far off, for the lion had taken that direction. That evening I turned in

with a somewhat mixed anticipation that perhaps a lively time was coming. Next morning, after breakfast, having seen that the cartridges in the magazine were all clean and ready, we set off to take up once more the tracks of the wounded beast. Starting, according to my custom, when ready without saying a word, I was pleased to note that all my boys, bearers as well as hunters, fell into line behind me, with, of course, the two bushmen. The dozen natives, all armed with spears, and following in single line, looked quite formidable, though I was aware not much reliance could be placed on my army. Little Boombo, who was not with me the previous day, now walked last of my followers, and I sung out for him to come to the front with me. He came up the line with a somewhat jaunty swing of the shoulders, receiving encouragement and probably chaff from the other natives, and from his expression it might be inferred that he judged the honour somewhat doubtful.

We soon picked up the tracks of the lions, but it was wretched country for the pursuit. Twice the boys cleared out with a false alarm, and it was plain they were all a trifle "jumpy." The second lioness had joined the other two, and we saw where they had been lying down, the big male leaving signs of blood at his stopping-place. Presently the tracks led out of the thorn bush, and away back right over the same country and over nearly the same spot where I had shot the

lion the day before. The boys were naturally anxious and slow, and I think did well to stick to the tracks at all. Finally, after some hours on the trail, the tracks again began to take us into thicker thorn-bush country.

It was all rather close work, and as it was becoming hot and I was getting tired, and there was no certainty of how far off the lions might still be, I began to think we should have to give the hunt up. However, just ahead of us was a patch of more open bush, once an old cultivation plot (or "lands" as it is called in Africa), where natives had grown mealies or other grain, now abandoned, the light reddish soil having been exhausted. This patch had three or four years' growth of young bushes scattered over it, besides old stumps and grass. Giving one of my boys my box of matches and telling them to start a fire, I myself made a circle, followed by the two bushmen and one or two of the other natives. When we had gone round to the far edge of the old lands, I thought I would wait there in some good position on the chance of getting a shot at the lions as they came past me from the fire, that is, if they were still there. No sooner had I decided that we had reached a good position, than my boys showed me fresh lion tracks, which I had crossed, showing that the lions had got on ahead of us. This seemed a finishing stroke, and I sat down to wait for the remainder of the boys before returning to my camp. In the meantime I asked the boys to

see how many lions had gone on, and they, after investigating for some time, held up their fingers and showed me that two lions only had passed.

When Tatello and the remaining boys arrived, we held a discussion. I told Tatello that as there were only two lion tracks here, I thought they must have missed the track of the wounded lion during the morning, and that he was perhaps lying dead a long way back in the bush. This Tatello had hardly begun vehemently to repudiate, when a noise like the squalling of a huge angry tom-cat brought the discussion to an abrupt end. The noise came from the lion himself, and, stuck between us and the advancing fire, he was clearly in a very angry and perhaps excusably bad temper. Immediately there was a wild hullabaloo and a general rush amongst my boys, and in very much less time than it takes to tell I found myself alone.

Thinking the wounded lion was following along the spoor in the same direction the lionesses had taken, I quickly got about a dozen yards to the right of the track. This left a fairly clear view to my left, and there I waited, kneeling behind a stump and bit of bush. The boys had rushed away to the edge of the old lands and had climbed into the trees; though, in fairness it must be mentioned, one of them stopped and ran a few yards back, touching me on the shoulder and saying something before hastening to rejoin the others. What he said I do not know, but I suppose it was something in the way of a warning.

At first I expected the lion to show up at any moment, but as the minutes passed and he did not come, my tension slackened a little, and I glanced back over my shoulder to see where my boys were. Perched up in three or four trees, some fifty yards to my rear, they all were, and the twelve niggers thus settled on the branches, one above the other, like a flock of great blackbirds, presented a distinctly comical appearance. They are not to be blamed for bolting. It was not as if I had been suddenly attacked and seized by the lion when they were with me. Their attitude now said quite plainly, "We have done our share in bringing him up to the lion; if the white man likes to remain down there looking for trouble, well and good; it's his funeral, not ours."

One more angry whine came from ahead, but nothing more, and there was no other sign of the animal. The fire in front was still burning and crackling, but only somewhat spasmodically, through the thinner grass of the old cultivation patch. I kept quite still, anxiously watching my front; but after a time I began to feel tired, and to wonder what should be the next move. I really could not stay there all day. It had been anxious and close work from the time we had first taken up the spoor of the wounded beast (for I knew there was a risk of having to stand a savage charge almost at any moment), and I did not feel too game: at the same time I wanted to finish the hunt. I did not like the idea of

throwing up and turning back at the last moment. Besides, the lion must have been very hard hit to have stayed behind when his lionesses fled, and for all I knew he might be so far gone and so weak as to be almost helpless. It was only the previous evening in camp that I had been re-reading some of my favourite poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon's from an old battered copy that I always carried in my tucker box. One poem in especial, "Lex Talionis," always appeals to me. In this Gordon says that the only excuse for the enjoyment of shooting such game as pheasants, hares, etc., and the other animals that cannot hit back is, that a man must also be prepared, when necessary, to take his chance with dangerous game.

" Shall we, hard hearted to their fates, thus
Soft hearted shrink from our own.
When the measure we mete is meted to us,
When we reap as we've always sown.
Shall we who for pastime have squandered life,
Who are styled the ' Lords of Creation,'
Recoil from our chance of more equal strife,
And our risk of retaliation ?

" Though short is the dying pheasant's pain,
Scant pity you may well spare,
And the partridge slain is a triumph vain,
And a risk that a child may dare.
You feel when you lower the smoking gun
Some ruth for yon slaughtered hare,
And hit or miss in your selfish fun,
The widgeon has little share.

" But you've no remorseful qualms or pangs
When you kneel by the grizzly's lair,
On that conical bullet your sole chance hangs,
'Tis the weak one's advantage fair,

And the shaggy giant's terrific fangs
Are ready to crush and tear ;
Should you miss one vision of home and friends,
Five words of unfinish'd prayer,
Three savage knife stabs, your sport ends
In the worrying grapple that chokes and rends—
Rare sport at least for the bear."

These lines came into my head while I waited kneeling. I thought of the beautiful buck I had shot from time to time, and "Hang it all, here goes," I said to myself; "I must have a cut at this." Of course, it may seem very foolish now, but that is how I felt at the time.

Hardly was my mind thus made up when I distinctly heard the lion. Plainly he was lessening the distance between us, and I could hear him breathing as though in distress, like a horse gone in the wind. Slight puffs of breeze (the wind was blowing almost straight from the lion to me) made me lose the sound of his breathing, and then as these puffs died down I could again pick up the sound. It was impossible to see him, but at any rate I could now locate roughly the direction in which he was lying.

Another longish wait followed, and now it seemed that he had stopped, for the sounds came no closer. Expecting every minute to catch a glimpse of him through the low bushes, I began very carefully and slowly (with a "the head master wishes to see you after twelve" feeling) to work my way towards where I heard him, stopping to listen every time a gust of wind

deadened the sound of his breathing. Slowly and with the greatest care I advanced some ten or twelve yards, expecting every second to see the lion, and feeling that if I could just get time to raise my rifle and cover him it would settle the matter at once. I had just worked up to a straggly young thorn bush, and was crouching behind it, when in a flash I saw the lion, moving, and moving rapidly, towards me. With poor generalship I had got into a bad place, since, though I could see him plainly, the thorn bush was too high to shoot over, and no one would dare attempt to shoot through it. I could neither run away nor remain where I was, so I had to step out clear of the bush, almost towards the charging beast. He was then quite close, within twenty yards perhaps. There was no time to kneel and get a sight on the broad chest: I had simply to throw up the rifle like a shot-gun and shoot straight into him. Where I hit him, or whether I missed him entirely (which was possible enough, for I expect my rifle went off more from fright than anything else), I did not know.* I only realised that I had fired, that he was still moving, and was now nearly upon me. This certainty that he had not been stopped brought a nasty tightening up sort of feeling, which was perhaps the most unpleasant part of the whole affair.

* I found long afterwards that I had broken his front leg, as a wounded lion with a track showing a front leg broken was a day or two later lying in the reeds, near the neighbouring Lekasi waterhole, and frightening the women from drawing water. Johnson and West told me this afterwards.

I tore back the bolt of my rifle, threw out the empty shell, and tried to jump back behind the bush out of the lion's way. He had charged in absolute silence, coming very fast, not in great bounds, but with a sort of run along the ground. Now he came round the bush like a flash, knocking me down, and throwing me several yards behind the bush. I do not quite understand how he actually knocked me over, for I was not clawed in any way, and I heard afterwards that I had broken one of his forelegs. I only know that when he reached me I was off my balance. Anyone who has done or watched much boxing will understand how a man, caught retreating off his balance, can be knocked over with quite a light blow—a blow hardly felt; it is a very different matter to receive a punch when advancing towards it.

Something similar to this, I think, happened in my case. After knocking me down, the lion rushed in on my right side, and instinctively I tried to ward him off by shoving my rifle, which I still had hold of, up against him. He bit savagely on this several times, biting right through and cracking the thin part of the stock. Then he seized me and bit me several times through the wrist, breaking it badly and splintering some of the small bones. These bites hurt like fury at the moment: it was like a nine-inch nail being continually driven through one's hand. The lion bit very quickly, but with a horribly silent ferocity. He would have done better, I

think, if he had taken more time over it. Then came several bites above the wrist and a big bite cracking the bone of the forearm below the elbow. My biceps caught the next bite, which cut clean to the bone, the muscle opening out like a cut in a leg of mutton. A bite through a muscle on the shoulder followed. As weakness made me lower the rifle, the lion, with a quick shuffle of his forefeet, closed up with me, whipping down his big head and biting me twice on the chest. These bites too, though not very bad, hurt badly, and the sight of his big, hairy head, so near that we almost rubbed noses, was unlovely and offensive. Suddenly, after biting me on the chest, he whipped round and cleared out of sight back in the bushes. I should like to describe him as staggering away to die, but as a matter of strict truth he appeared to make off fairly briskly. Why he left me in this abrupt and unexpected way I do not know.

I have at least no grudge against my adversary, for had he not behaved in true British fashion? Bailed up, he had reserved his strength for a final grim charge, and, having overthrown his attacker, he retired still undefeated. My old helmet, much patched with grass, and four Mannlicher cartridges somewhere in the sand, remained on the field of battle as tokens of his victory. Nowadays, when modern rifles are so excellent, it would be ill to grudge a wild animal an occasional victory, no matter how unpleasant that victory may personally be to the defeated person. As in

politics, and in everything else that really matters, those who hunt dangerous game must be prepared, like the Romans, to be equal to either fortune.

I had heard it said, and even had read the same opinion in one of the books of that splendid and experienced hunter, Frederick Selous, that bites from a lion may not be felt at the time. I can only say my own experience is vastly different—the bites through the wrist in especial hurt like the devil.

My first impression when the lion left me was a feeling that, anyhow, I was still alive, and not so very much hurt either. My next thought was for my rifle. The bolt being open when the lion seized me, all the spare cartridges had sprung out of the magazine in the shaking it got, and there was blood and dust inside. Hurriedly with my left hand I picked a cartridge out of my top shirt pocket and shoved it in the rifle, only to find I was unable to drive the bolt home through the pain of my broken wrist and lack of strength. It now dawned on me that with a wounded and angry lion still somewhere near at hand and an unloaded rifle, the sooner I got away the better. So, carrying my rifle in my left hand, I walked to the trees where the boys had been perched ; but the birds had all flown, though I could hear them chattering in the distance. It was on seeing the lion catch me that they had all got down and cleared out.

Probably I must have been a bit rattled or

stupid from the shaking I had received, because instead of moving away and joining the boys, which was the obvious thing to do, I stopped under the trees which they had climbed, and tried again to get a cartridge into the rifle. But the broken wrist was hurting badly, and, putting down the rifle, I rubbed my wrist against the rough bark of one of the trees in the hope of stopping the pain. Presently the boys, all much frightened, came creeping back to me in ones and twos, seeking to induce me to go away with them from danger. Now, though I certainly could not have used it, to get my rifle loaded again had become an obsession, and the one thing I must pigheadedly insist on. I kept handing my rifle to different boys, trying to show them how to clinch the bolt for me, but they were so frightened (and drenched with blood as I was I expect I cut rather a ghastly figure), that it was only after several had fumbled it about, putting it down or handing it back to me, that I got one of them to shove the bolt in. Then immediately I felt faint and sick, and everything seemed to go cold and black, though I managed, with the help of some of the boys, to walk a few hundred yards.

I now felt that I must lie down, but the boys persuaded me to keep going, exclaiming, "The lion, the lion; he's too close." A few hundred yards more, and I knew I could not walk all the distance home, but must needs lie down. When I told the boys that two of them must go at once

to the camp and bring my old riding mule to meet me, a great argument arose as to which two should go, for they all seemed frightened at the thought of being separated from each other. I could hear them discussing who should go : " Marpo must go. No, Marparonga must go. No, Shara must go," etc. etc. Finally they decided that two Makwengo must go to the camp for the mule—of course the worst two who could be picked ; not that it made any difference, for the two little bushmen had not the least intention of going.

All this jabber made me so mad, that suddenly I felt quite strong again, and, getting up, straight away I managed to walk home to my camp quite easily. My boys were terribly frightened, and I knew there was a chance—especially if they thought I might die—of the whole lot bolting and leaving me alone in the camp ; the fear of being blamed for a white man's death, and perhaps some superstition as well, might quite easily make them clear out *en masse*, simply through pure fright.

On the way back to the camp we passed close to a tree bearing a small fruit with a taste not unlike that of an apple. The bushmen called this tree " naharnie," and Qumano and Boombo, like the children they are, forgetting temporary troubles, immediately ran to gather some handfuls of the fruit. It was always a source of amusement in my camp that I should be so anxious to pick up and occasionally air my knowledge of the

bushman language, so I called out to the older bushman, "Qumano, naharnie." "Uun," said Qumano. "Naharnie tséka," said I. "Uun tséka," said the little bushman. This short interlude seemed to cheer up my scared boys and they started chattering again, thinking perhaps that things were not too bad with the white man if he still had a joke in him.

When we reached the camp I washed the wounds with a cake of carbolic soap—to which proceeding I expect I owe my freedom from blood-poisoning—and bound them up as best I could with pieces of calico. I had received altogether twelve bites, and my hand and arm by this time began to feel as if they had been through a chaff-cutter. The native African, I believe, accounts for the poisonous nature of most lion wounds by declaring that it is the *breath* of the lion which is the cause of the trouble, and in order to expel this breath, the injured person must be dosed with some barbarous concoction. I have no doubt that the fit of sickness brought on by this treatment may, after all, do good indirectly to the patient.

On the fourth day I reached my main camp near the Quandoo, my boys having carried me down on a rough stretcher made of saplings. A day or so later Mafoota arrived, and very kindly stayed at my camp several weeks till I pulled through the worst part. He also had a supply of that indispensable stuff, permanganate of potash. I set the broken wrist and injured arm on a piece of

pine board, and all except the wrist wounds healed very quickly, in spite of lack of medicines, the violation of the laws of hygiene and the routine of hospitals. Over and over again the same bandages were washed and used, but no signs of blood-poisoning appeared. The long night hours were the worst part: even then, lying there crippled, a certain unending charm in the beautiful African nights brought compensation. All night one could hear the hippo in the pools—sometimes quite close; frequently a lion or a leopard, with at times the shrill whistling of a frightened reed-buck. It was just as well, if only on account of my old mule, that no lion paid a visit to my camp during this time; and it was curious how right through my trip, even though I had donkeys with me, a notoriously tempting bait for lions, they never raided my camp.

Mafoota was not so lucky, however, for when he came to this same camp with his little herd of cattle a few days after I had left, he struck trouble right away—a lion seizing and carrying off a calf the first night. The following night the rascal came again, carrying off one of his boys, and it was only on Mafoota—roused by the barking of the dogs and yells of his niggers—running out and firing some shots over him, that he dropped the boy and made off. The boy was not very badly bitten, having only been seized by the shoulder. Thinking my old camp was getting too hot, Mafoota retreated next day with his herd

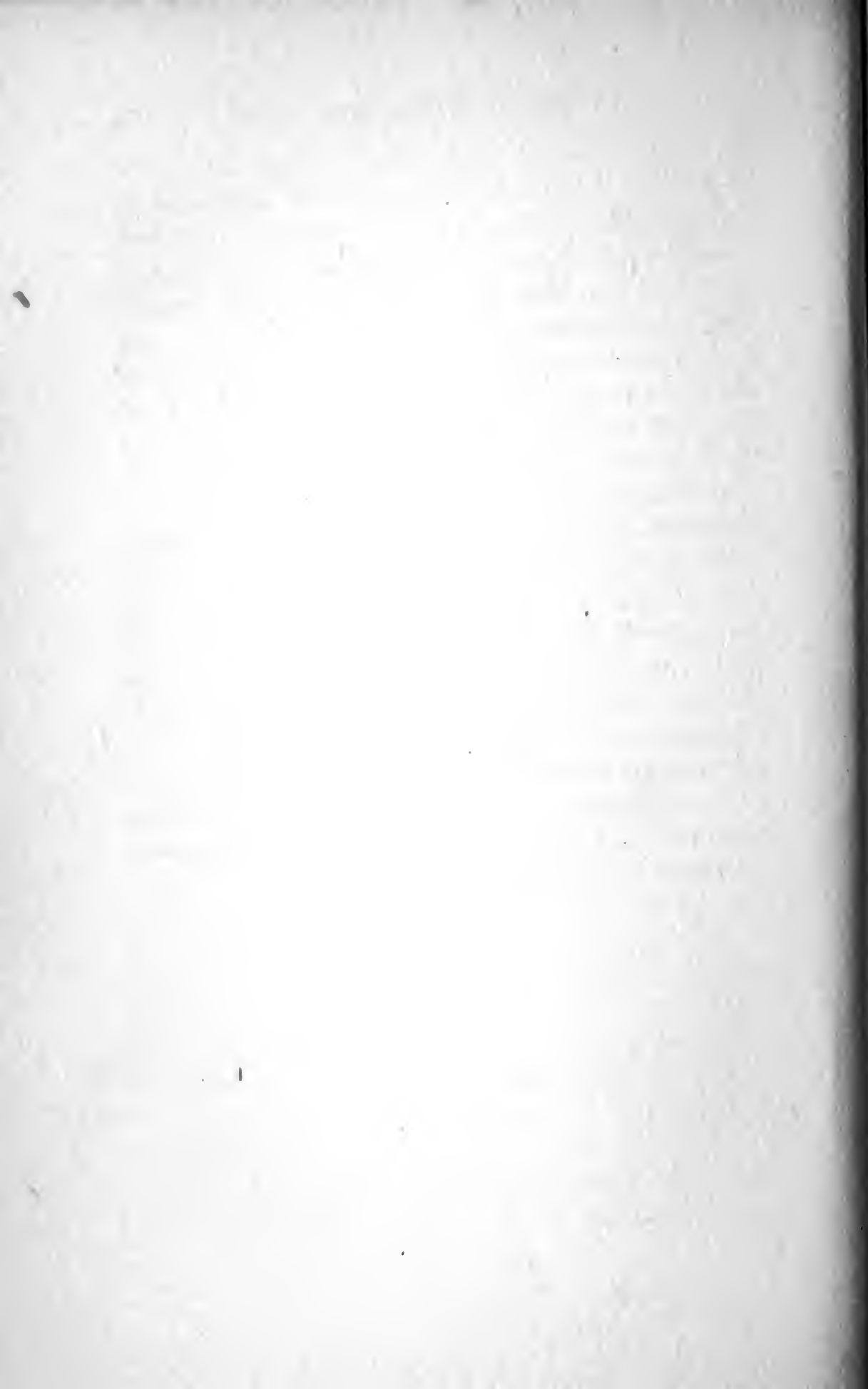
to his own headquarters. But the same lion, evidently running up the tracks of the cattle, followed him right home during the night and, breaking in through his stockade of poles, seized and killed two of the donkeys I had brought over from German South-West. Again disturbed and fired at, the lion made off once more, but returned yet again the following night, when he was shot by a volley fired by a Dutchman and several natives, who were all perched in trees on the look-out for him. This particularly bold lion was still in his prime and very fat, unusual in these cases.

My three little piccaninnies stuck to me faithfully and nursed me, little savages though they were, all through my sickness.

It was about August 20 that a native came to my camp with letters from the Native Commissioner, Mr. Venning, from Sesheke. In the letters was the terrible news of the outbreak of war at home. Never shall I forget reading the opening lines of his letter: "You will no doubt be surprised to learn that Germany and Austria are fighting nearly every other European nation, including England." The shock was tremendous, and I fretted at lying there crippled, alone in a tent away beyond the Quandoo, when all my relatives and fellow-countrymen would be taking their part in the gigantic struggle. Of course it made me more anxious than ever to get well quickly, for I felt that my knowledge of those parts of German S.W., which but few other

Englishmen could have been through, might be of use. I began to look forward anxiously to the time when I should be strong enough to travel, for after being laid up a little over two months, my hand and arm had almost completely healed, and I had gained enough strength to sit my old mule once more, though the fingers and wrist of my right hand were still quite useless (the wrist was stiff and the fingers had lost their use), and the arm was somewhat crooked at the elbow.

It took me about twelve days getting across to Schuckmansberg, the former German Residence. There I found a party of Rhodesian Police, white and black, in occupation, the Germans having surrendered the place without opposition. I met with the greatest kindness from the Rhodesian officers, and was fortunate in getting the professional services of the doctor attached to the troops, who found it necessary to do a small operation on the wounded hand. When I had recovered from this, I was able to make my last stage on the return to Livingstone and civilisation.



PART II

WAR: A SCOUTS' PATROL



CHAPTER I

UNEMPLOYED

ON the news of the outbreak of war, I was at once anxious to persuade the authorities of the South African Union to attack German South-West by the road I had entered. No other Englishman, as far as I was aware, knew anything of the country between Rhodesia and German South-West, and I felt sure that even a small expedition of the right kind would be of assistance to the main work of the Union forces in the south.

When I first discussed the proposal with Major O'Sullivan, the Commandant at Schuckmansberg—a fine soldier, who later on proved his worth, and the trust his black police put in him during the repeated German attacks on his camp at Sasai—he at once saw my point, and agreed that such a move might be decidedly useful.

My next duty was to interview Colonel Edwards, the Rhodesian Commandant-General at Salisbury; and, armed with letters from him to General Botha, I then journeyed to Pretoria. Unfortunately General Botha was away, but his chief intelligence officer, Colonel Wyndham, seemed glad to meet

someone with fresh information concerning that part of German South-West which was known to me, and the German colony generally, and he appeared more than favourable to making the proposed move by that route. He carried me off straight away to see the Minister of Defence, General Smuts, in the hope of obtaining permission for a small expedition.

My mission now came to an abrupt and inglorious end. General Smuts would not hear of anything being done—indeed he never listened to the proposal. "It is only a hunter's idea," said he, "and all hunters are mad. Look at you, for instance," he went on, "you have only just had your arm broken by a lion and yet you don't seem to mind." Finally the General remarked that either the members of the expedition would be captured and shot by the Germans, or, alternatively, that the *natives would murder everybody*. Now, considering that I had been the greater part of a year hunting amongst these tribes, myself the only white man, this latter statement struck me as somewhat remarkable. As a matter of fact, I knew that, far from a small expedition having anything to fear from the native peoples, it would have been most necessary for a white man whom they knew—as they knew me—to keep a few days ahead of any armed force, in order to prepare the inhabitants for what was coming, and so, by allaying their natural anxiety, induce them to sell grain, milk, etc., to the troops.

Otherwise whole kraals would have bolted away ahead of us into the bush or reeds.

Anyhow, that interview settled all chance of a move via Rhodesia. In Cape Town I saw the Portuguese Consul-General, and through him wrote to the Governor of Angola, advising him of the likelihood of the Portuguese having troubles with the Germans along their boundaries, and mentioning that later on, on the Okavango river in particular, they might expect considerable worry. I offered them the help of a small party of mounted men from Rhodesia, if permission from the Union Authorities was also obtained.

To this the Governor replied that he was not authorised to accept any outside volunteers. I also had a couple of interviews with Sir Lewis Mitchell of the Chartered Co., who, hearing I was in Cape Town, was naturally anxious to possess any information which might be used to forestall a possible raid into Rhodesia by Germans or Dutch rebels from German South-West. He told me he was sending to Dr. Jameson the written reports I had given him.

There was nothing left for me now but to return home to Australia to see if it were possible to get the injured hand fixed up by an operation. I felt as miserable as a bandicoot at being a cripple when all one's countrymen and relatives were hurrying to take part in the big struggle.

No sooner had we reached Sydney than I called on Sir Herbert Maitland, one of the best-known

surgeons in Australia. After a quick examination, "It is quite useless," he said; "nothing can be done for that," and he smiled when I said, "Oh, that won't do, doctor; I want to get away to the war." Examinations by other doctors followed, only to convince me that nothing could be hoped for, at any rate, for the time, from an operation. To recover some use of the hand by massage was all that could be done, and then perhaps later an operation might be effective. The hand and wrist were still sore and inflamed, and pieces of bone, splintered by those big teeth, kept working out.

In Brisbane I found a cable awaiting me from a private and reliable source, with the information that the powers that be were after all considering the advisability of making the move that I had urged. Should it come off, I knew there would be a chance for me to get employment as a guide, and this chance was too good to lose. The crippled hand made impossible any pretence of passing the medical examination for ordinary service.

Mr. Lewis, a young friend on the look-out for adventure, joined me, and we started by the first available boat for Cape Town, taking three Queensland-bred horses with us.

On arrival at Cape Town I had interviews with the Imperial Secretary, and with the Governor-General, who was good enough to send for me. From the latter I heard that my proposal had

been discussed, but, rightly or wrongly, so he said, had been turned down. This was certainly a disappointment, but Lord Buxton's courtesy at our interview removed at least the sore feeling aroused by my previous treatment. In the belief that, as I had written in my report, the Okavango district would be invaded by some German force later on, we then went to Salisbury, and to our great delight were at once accepted as Intelligence Scouts. The work given to us, and to four others (residents, and all known to me personally), was the watching of the Rhodesian, Angola, and German South-West borders. We were signed on as special service troopers in the B.S.A. Police.

CHAPTER II

INTELLIGENCE SCOUT

OUR horses and mules duly procured, we started away from Livingstone, crossing the Zambezi at Sesheke, and picking up there the eight Marosi ("Barotse") who were detailed to me as government runners for sending reports. It was glorious to be in the bush again and to feel that, after all, one was of some use.

Before reaching the Quandoo I had my first shot at a buck since the encounter with the lion. I found that now I had to pull the trigger with the second finger, and in spite of this I managed to kill a sable at the first attempt. It was a simple pot shot, but it pleased me hugely, besides giving me confidence.

In nine days from Sesheke we reached the Quandoo, crossing late in the evening and camping on the bank of the river. That night we had a great welcome from the lions; five of them, at least, roared almost continually till daybreak. Probably, when coming to water, they had struck our track along the river and followed up the scent of our horses and mules. Neither before nor since have I heard quite so much of their lordly noise.

Next morning I paid a visit to my old friend Mafoota, who was startled at the sight of a mounted man in uniform riding up. He said that at first he thought it was the "Square Heads," concerning whom at that time he lived in considerable anxiety. He had no reason, of course, to expect to see me; he was not even aware that I had returned to Africa, and the last he had seen of me was a rather sorry spectacle bandaged up and making for civilisation on an old mule.

To get boys and fix things up generally, we had to spend several days at Sepango, and this allowed plenty of time for some good yarns with Mafoota. On one occasion we were discussing the lion that had visited him (mentioned on earlier pages), and the old man reckoned that this particular lion exploded a number of theories. For instance, it is said that white clothes frighten a lion, but this fellow brushed one white towel away himself with his paw when breaking into the donkey's kraal. Then, too, the only donkey in the kraal with a bell was the first to be seized and killed by this lion—so much for bells as lion-scarers. The old man told me also that his boy, whom the lion had seized and bitten, had, when quite young, been seized by and escaped from a crocodile. "I told his mother," said Mafoota, "that he must be God's child all right."

On the second day, whilst sitting yarning together, seven natives appeared, and Mafoota, who was acting as a sort of forwarding and inter-

mediate agent for the Scouts and their runners, began to interrogate them. Of the Scouts, West and Johnson were close to Libebe watching that corner, and Sinclair and Van Rensberg were about 150 miles farther up, on the Quito. These natives brought a letter for Rensberg, which the old man opened and started to read. Then came an exclamation, "By God, Sinclair's been killed by a lion!" It had been a horrible accident, as the letter related, and later on we learnt all the details.

What happened was this: Sinclair and Rensberg were at the time about nine miles from the Quito; the former, according to his custom, walking ahead on foot, and Rensberg behind with the cart. Sinclair had three or four boys with him, all wild Mombakush, and quite untrustworthy at a pinch. They came suddenly on a big pack of lions, perhaps half a dozen or more, who had just killed a roan right on the track. Sinclair, who had only with him his service Lee-Metford, fired, shooting one, a lioness, through the body; thereupon the lions all bolted, the wounded lioness, evidently very hard hit, retiring slowly by herself.

Sinclair, having an excellent heavy rifle, a .470 (his favourite elephant gun in fact), on the wagon, now sent a boy back for this, as he knew well the danger of a charge at close quarters with only a .303 in his hand. Unfortunately, through some mistake, he had on his own belt the key of

the wooden locker in the cart in which this spare heavy rifle was kept, and the boy, returning without the gun, tried to explain that the weapon could not be procured unless the locker in the cart was opened. Angered, it seems, at the delay, Sinclair decided to see where the wounded beast had got to, and, with no weapon but the small-bore service rifle, started to follow the spoor.

The lioness had not gone far before she lay down—we saw the place a few weeks afterwards ourselves, and, of course, also heard the full account from Rensberg. She was lying in a small clump of bushes, flat as a hide on the ground in the way they do, and watching the approach of her enemy. When Sinclair was within about eighty yards, out she came like lightning, clearing any small bushes in the way in great, low bounds. She was on him in a twinkling, and for some reason he never fired at her; his rifle was afterwards found lying loaded with the cartridge in it. When dying, the poor fellow told Rensberg that he never knew why he had not fired, but thought that the side protectors on the foresight had worried him. It was certainly not lack of nerve, for Sinclair was wonderfully cool, an excellent shot, and only the previous year he had stopped and killed two elephants which were charging from different quarters.

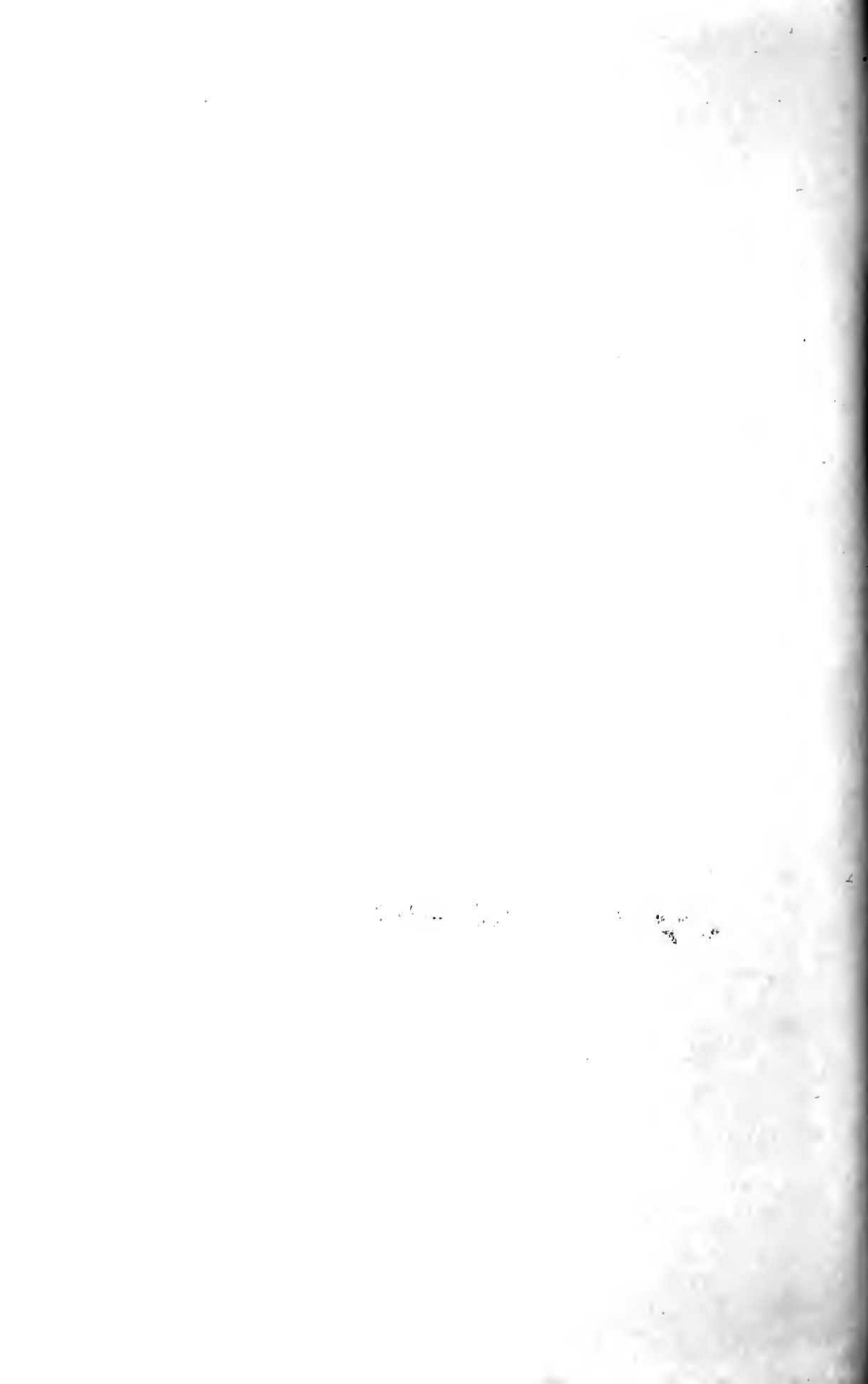
The lioness seized his left arm and threw him to the ground, where he was horribly bitten and mauled. In spite of this, with the greatest

presence of mind and pluck, he managed to draw his hunting-knife, and a terrible struggle took place between man and beast. The lioness herself was mortally wounded and failing, for, in spite of the terrible wounds he was receiving, Sinclair, by repeated stabs, actually killed her in the struggle. When found by Rensberg—who came up some time afterwards—the lioness was lying dead by Sinclair's side, her great forepaws stretched across his legs. The dying man recovered consciousness, but his injuries were terrible, and nothing could be done for him except to relieve his pain as much as possible and let him lie where he was found till death came.

That night the lions returned, looking, no doubt, for both the meat of their prey, of which they had been robbed, and for their missing companion. It was necessary to build a big scherm and good fires for the protection of the camp and the oxen, and all night beyond the fires the roar of the great cats was heard. Poor Sinclair died during the night, his Dutch comrade doing all he could for him. Amidst all the tremendous slaughter of the world war, not many died a lonelier death than Sinclair's, or in a wilder spot.

It was only a few months before that I had last seen him. He and Mafoota were then sitting yarning with me in my camp, at a time when I was myself suffering from my encounter with the lion. Sinclair had had pretty fair luck in his first year's elephant hunting in those parts, and, quite





alone, had himself killed over a dozen elephants in one season. I remember him saying, when we discussed the comparative danger of various animals, that as far as an elephant was concerned, he would walk up and shoot him as he would a great pig, and think no more about it, but that for a lion he had very great respect. This remark shows the confidence he had acquired, for it is well known that an elephant can be extremely dangerous. Two days we waited for Rensberg, who was coming in with the dead man's belongings, and each night we heard the lions, some of them even continuing roaring well after sunrise.

The death of Sinclair involved alterations in our plans. West and Johnson, capital fellows both, were out near Libebe watching the lower part of the river ; we had met at Schuckmansberg in October when they first went out. Lewis and myself were to have worked right ahead of Sinclair in order to find out what was going on around Kuringkuru, the headquarters of such German force as was on the river. Now, the Quito end and the more advanced part that required watching in case either Germans or rebels tried to get across into Rhodesia had been left open by Sinclair's death and Rensberg's return, and it was necessary for us to hurry there and fill the gap in the screen of scouts.

We needed a few carriers, and when these were obtained, Lewis and I hurried off to Libebe to look for Johnson and West. The previous wet season

had been the driest the people in these parts had ever known, and, consequently, the grain crop had been very poor, while the water between the Quandoo and Okavango, already beginning to get scarce, was confined to a few main pans and sand-pits.

On the third day of our journey we passed my old camp, where in March I had been lying ill with fever, and only after a hard struggle had pulled round. Four months later, when I had quite recovered and was on that last lion hunt, I had passed this camp for the second time, and, stopping, had said a short mental prayer of gratitude to Providence for having pulled through and for being as fit as ever. Then three weeks later I had been carried back by six savages on an abominably hard stretcher, with a wrist and arm broken, and generally pretty sore from a mauling. I remember quite well that as I passed the old place I turned my head on the stretcher to have a look at it, wondering sourly at the same time, since my last stage seemed to be worse than the first, whether I had not been perhaps a little premature in my previous thanksgiving. Now, however, I was not so badly off after all. Although the wrist was quite stiff, I had got back at least a good half of the use of my thumb and first three fingers, and, in addition, I was in the greatest spirits at the knowledge that, in spite of previous discouragement, I had been able to fit into some sort of service in the big struggle.

CHAPTER III

MY FELLOW SCOUTS

RENSBERG caught us up on the fourth day, and the old chap proved a great addition—a first-class bushman who could live on as little as anyone I ever met, and, like most of his countrymen, a first-class shot and a great hand at keeping the camp in meat. The old chap's only failing was that common weakness of so many Dutchmen—a lust of slaughter. It seemed impossible sometimes for him to resist shooting, even if we already possessed more meat than we could carry. (At the end we had almost a coolness over this.) However, a better mate in the bush I never expect to meet.

Unlike the Boer as generally depicted, Rensberg was a little man of rather delicate appearance ; in spite of a hard life in later years spent almost entirely amongst savages, he retained the instincts of a gentleman. Some of Rensberg's remarks amused us immensely. He told us once, and as naïvely as a child (after all, in many ways he was little else), that “ he did hope the war would last a long time so that he could earn plenty of money.” Another time, whilst discussing various bucks

with him, we mentioned how fine a great bull koodoo looked when standing alert. "He looks so beautiful," said the old man, "that you could not help *shooting him*."

Sassaby, that very wary buck, Rensberg described as "having eyes stronger than what looking-glasses (field-glasses) are."

When, scouting together later on, it became necessary for one of us to ride forward on the approach of a party of doubtful appearance, Rensberg, who went under the name of "the old general," would dismount and take up what he called a "petition," and an exceedingly good man he was with his long Lee-Enfield to have at one's back. Once when we were scouting, he asked me, "Have you got a white flag ready in case we find we have got a bad petition? Because if we put that up and they shoot at it, *then we will know there is danger*." And he asked us quite seriously one day whether we thought a German could be killed with a "hard" bullet—the point of a .303 bullet, if not a soft nose, wants blunting to kill buck with certainty. On my assuring him that a German COULD certainly be killed with an untampered bullet, Rensberg replied that in that case he thought it necessary that the unfortunate Teuton should at least be given a "head shot."

I had the bad luck about here to lose the little Irish terrier I had brought from Salisbury; the little fellow somehow managed to stay behind at our camp one morning trek. A government

messenger from Sesheke, who caught me with a special despatch from the C.G., said in answer to our inquiries that he had seen no dog, but only two lions eating something on the track. What the something was he could not say, but I am afraid that meal was the end of Bingo, for he never turned up again.

Three days from Johnson's camp we struck the kraal of Maruta, a particularly fat and unprepossessing Mombakush chief who bears a bad character in connection with the stealing and selling of female Maquengo children, a traffic which still goes on in these parts. I had him called before me after putting on, to be duly impressive, my B.S.A. uniform—the first uniform of any nationality seen in that district, I should think—and solemnly warned him that the English had a long, long arm, that already a black mark was against him, and that a continuation of his evil practices would bring sudden retribution and extinction upon him one of these days. I think he really got quite a bad fright, especially as Johnson, unknown to me at that time, had given him a similar warning, punctuated, I heard afterwards, by the discharge of his Browning alongside the old ruffian's ear.

During our time out there we looked into this slave trading. The Portuguese had never had the slightest authority themselves in these parts, and the practice has been for the petty chiefs to get hold of the girl children from the little Ma-

quengo villages, and sell them, when old enough, to traders from the coast for cattle. It is particularly hard to get any accurate information, the bushmen being terribly shy and frightened of the Mombakush, and to strike at the root of the evil it is absolutely necessary to talk with the bush people in their own language. A bushman named Kavetto, who was with me on this trip, told me, and I believe he was speaking the truth, that his girl child had been stolen from him three years back, and was now in the hands of old Mokoya, the principal chief on the Luiyanna, and a notorious old ruffian. To test Kavetto, I told him that doubtless he had himself sold the child to Mokoya ; but this he most indignantly and, I am convinced, quite sincerely denied. We assured Kavetto that when the Germans were " finished " we would return that way and then his child should be restored to him. The next morning, however, the little man disappeared ; either he had been frightened in the night by some Mombakush, or was fearful lest he should eventually bring retribution on himself from old Mokoya. It wants but one example to be made to stop this traffic. Let one of the implicated Indunas, Mokoya or Maruta for instance, be seized by police some fine morning and taken off in handcuffs, *not to return*, the effect would be such that it would be talked about in that country for the next 300 years, and no bush child would in future ever be touched, nor would its parents be murdered

while protecting their children. Perhaps something may yet be done to eradicate from this far-off and poor corner the accursed evil of the slave trade.

Two of our horses died at Maruta's of horse sickness, and at the same time, as we afterwards learnt, one of the two left at Sepango in Mafoota's charge, died also. All the remainder, however, both horses and mules, appeared salted, and we still had sufficient mounts for the three of us besides a spare mule, old "Jenny," for the pack. As we had expected, West and Johnson were away when we reached the little vley which they made their headquarters (if they could be said to have such a thing as headquarters), but our bushmen messengers soon found them. Africa is a big country, but the wilder the country, as long as there are native inhabitants, the easier it is to get into touch with anyone's whereabouts.

Within three days West and Johnson returned, though they were thirty miles away at another pan when the bushmen found them. While we were waiting I picked up a Maquengo youth of very pleasing countenance, named Boombo: Boombo seems as common in Maquengo as "Jack" or "Tom" in England. He was persuaded to accompany us, but I did not recognise him the next morning, and neither did Lewis. This nice-looking Maquengo in the camp had quite a bright yellowish-red colour, while Boombo of the previous day was dark.

The mystery was cleared up by my head boy, who said that "he had taken him down and washed him, as he was to be the master's boy." This I am sure was the first and the last wash that Boombo every enjoyed; as a matter of fact, these people simply never do wash, literally *never*.

The same afternoon with our new acquisition I went a-seeking meat. About a mile out from the camp I noticed the boy look at something hard, then, after turning to me with a peculiar smile, he looked again and pointed. Through the broken bush I could see what I took to be three zebras, one apparently a mare with a big foal alongside. Now, though I hate and detest shooting a zebra, we wanted meat so badly that half unwillingly, and therefore carelessly, without taking trouble to stalk them properly, I walked round a patch of bush to get closer, undecided after all whether I would shoot or not.

On turning the corner the reason of the boy's peculiar smile became apparent—they were lions and not zebras; a lioness, a lion, and a young three-parts grown lioness. The lioness was quite near, and looked a very big animal; she was near enough for me to see the long sweep of the great shoulder as she slowly walked along. Naturally I made a mess of it, and tried to get into a clump of small trees, thinking I could there get a still closer and safer shot than in the open. The bushman himself stood quite still, but the lions spotted us and bolted immediately, and I only

got a running shot at each of the two lionesses, in neither case registering a hit. The bushman ran on at once to the spoor, without the least apparent fear or hesitation, to see if there was any blood; but, of course, there was not. That evening I presented the astonished Boombo with a new blanket, but the following morning, after I had asked him if the blanket kept him warm, and had been told in reply that "they were very nice things," he quietly disappeared into the bush with his newly won reward. Evidently having so easily acquired a fortune, he considered it unnecessary to consider the question of further work.

Johnson and West had much to tell me. These two men had been out since October watching the whole of that corner entirely alone, and for a time they had found things fairly rough, especially when they ran out of all supplies and were obliged to live on wildebeeste meat and Maboola rings, none too dainty rations. Moreover, a small German force arrived in December and drove the Portuguese completely off the river, destroying all their five forts. At Cuangar the Portuguese garrison was entirely wiped out, and a Portuguese trader called "Kajimba," well known both to Rensberg and myself, was killed there with his native wife and children. By all accounts an Ovambo chief at Kuringkuru, named "Howango," was directly concerned with the Germans in this business. At the other forts the Portuguese had either sur-

rendered or run away without fighting. This naturally had created amongst the natives a feeling of great respect for the detestable Germans. "Look here," the Germans had said; "you see what we have done to the Portuguese because they are friends of the English, and you can see how the English have not been able to help them."

A good deal of tact and courage was required in those days for two Britishers to hold their own out there, and make the natives believe that plenty of Englishmen would come later on if they were wanted. Johnson was a particularly experienced man with native peoples, especially with these particular savages. A splendid shot, a straight and honourable man, never wanting to bustle or hurry a native, yet possessing a pair of blue eyes that looked "no nonsense" when occasion demanded. He was an ideal intelligence scout for a job like this, and West was just such another. From first to last we had the truest comradeship from both men, and our little patrol of three out on the advanced post at the Quito always felt that we could rely on those two men behind us, even though seven days away, as though they were a dozen.

Johnson and West came as far as the river with us, and there together we sent for and interviewed old Libebe, the paramount chief of all the Mombakush. I had met the old man on a former journey through that region, and our recognition was mutual. Old Libebe wore a worried look

those days, for, as Johnson said, he was between the devil and the deep blue sea. With his own eyes he had seen the destruction of the Portuguese fort alongside his kraal, and no doubt had heard, from the missionaries near him, the German version or forecast of what was to happen in the future. On the other hand, he had been warned by Johnson and West, in several serious talks, as to what would happen if he failed to send them every news of German movements by his fastest runner.

One of Libebe's sons, named Sisho, and his old Prime Minister (shall we call him?) spent some time with me on my previous hunting trip, and when they left, had been promised that on our return home a suit of clothes should be sent to each of them by the missionaries. Since then the war had broken out and upset everything. Luckily, I had not forgotten this old promise, and so had brought with me the expected clothes, and sure enough the first question they asked (for both were present at the indaba) was whether I had remembered the promise. When the separate parcel for each was produced, they expressed the highest delight. Even a small thing like this makes a big impression on native people, for they realise that the white man's word is as good as his bond, and can be relied upon.

Next morning we separated, our route taking us up the river, whilst Johnson and West turned down-stream to investigate the report of a wagon

and some white men in that direction. The Portuguese fort had been completely levelled; all the buildings had been burnt and heavy rain had flattened everything out afterwards. Thinking this sight might be a discouraging start for my carriers and Marosie runners, and knowing that the great thing with a nigger, if you do not want him to get scared, is to appear never to be hiding anything, I asked them, while they were staring at the ruins, if they did not see what the Germans would do to them if they caught us. For a second or two they looked serious, then, seeing me trying to hide a smile at their long faces, their spokesman said, "What does that matter? We are all men, aren't we, and can fight them if we meet them?"

The country was greatly changed along the Okavango since I had previously travelled it. Then it had been newly burnt; now the grass was very high and rank everywhere, and I could hardly recognise my old camps. The difference was as great as between a fat and a poor horse, or as the contrast between a lean and a well-fed beast.

A couple of days later we turned off the river and cut across through the sand veld, watering at sand-pits till we hit the Quito about thirty miles from the junction. It was too open a country to travel right along the frontage without knowing how things were, and whether any band of the enemy was in the neighbourhood. Our plan was to look for some suitable, but well-

hidden, camp near the Quito, and there to watch any movement or force whether coming down the river from Cuangar past Diriko, or trying to cross the Quito higher up and cut across by the Luiyanna into Rhodesia. Rensberg, who before the war had journeyed in these parts elephant hunting, was now an invaluable help.

CHAPTER IV

“ BUSH-RANGERS’ REST ”

AFTER a little trouble we luckily picked on a camp with all the qualifications required : well hidden in the bush, but close to the river, with good grazing close by. As there were no native kraals for a good many miles on any side of us, we found game, which was absolutely essential, quite plentiful. Though never staying in one camp very long, for we always kept moving lest we should be caught or trapped, we came to look upon this as, at least, our head camp and meeting-place, and it got to be known amongst all the scouts as “ The Bush-rangers’ Rest.”

I certainly had no wish to fall into the hands of any German patrol, for I feared there might have been some little difficulty in explaining my previous trip through their colony, since, of course, I should have been recognised. Old Rensberg, too, reckoned that if they got in, “ being a Dutchman ” would have been ground enough for putting him out of the world.

Our first work was to see the principal Induna on the river, one Siccumberro, a rather pleasant-looking and decent native. He had behaved well

to the Portuguese soldiers who had fled to his kraal for food and shelter from Diriko when the Germans destroyed their fort, and had helped them finally to get away to some of their people in the interior. With him, just as with Libebe and as with every Induna big or small on the river, who were all visited either then or later, we arranged that information and warning of any movement on the part of the Germans should be sent to us immediately.

It was here that we first learnt of parties of white men camping and hunting on the Okavango river higher up, and we at once decided they must be Dutch rebels from Maritz’s former comandos, with possibly Maritz himself among them. Rensberg and I went to investigate, and found the report true—there were five of these Dutch rebels, with several wagons, a little below Bunja. Assured of this, and not wishing to attract attention, we worked back across about thirty miles of dry country to the Quito, and re-swimming the river, made home again to the good Bush-rangers’ Rest. Lewis had been suffering from a very severe and painful abscess on his leg, caused by one of those beastly poisonous ticks, and we found the camp almost out of meat—a serious thing for us in those parts, for it meant going heavier on our scanty supplies of flour, and using up the supply of grain for the boys. As the previous season had been exceedingly dry on the Quito, there was very little grain to be bought

from the native inhabitants, not enough, in fact, to spare for any of our horses. Native boys at a pinch can live for weeks on absolutely nothing but meat, but we always tried to give ours at least a small ration of grain daily in addition. Even a tiny cupful, with plenty of meat, makes all the difference. We never allowed ourselves to run short of salt, a little salt being tremendously appreciated by the boys, and helping besides to keep them healthy. By this time we had to depend entirely upon native grain, stamped up into flour by the women at their kraals, for our own bread and porridge. Rensberg was as usual the man to procure the necessary meat, and shot, the first evening, two beautiful sable from a big mob that came on to the flat below us.

This handsome buck can be a very determined fighter when bailed up, and a dangerous enemy to dogs: the large curved horns are sharp as daggers, and as he strikes out, the long side-way sweep throws them right back over his shoulder with a deadly swish. Even the lion, the great buck-killer himself, has to be very careful, for, as old Rensberg says, "If he [the sable] sticks his behind into a durn bush, he [the lion] can't do noddings to him."

We needed a lot of meat those days for ourselves and for our boys and to keep the camp going generally, and I rather encouraged the wandering savages who visited us in the hope of gaining a piece of meat; for by this means we were kept

well informed of all the news and all the rumours, both up and down the rivers. Then, too, we were anxious to shoot enough game to give us a good supply of reserved biltong always on hand. For this reason I was particularly pleased to come upon a fine herd of forty or fifty eland, three of which I managed to kill with my little sporting Lee-Enfield—all dead shots. Of course they were really very easy shots, as the big buck were flurried and did not know which way to run. Still, as I am but a moderate shot, and as I only used four cartridges, there was justification for boasting at the result, especially as my two comrades in the camp, who heard the four rapid shots, were sceptical when I told them what the bag was. Unfortunately, one of the three was a cow; it is always hateful to kill the female, particularly of the eland species.

Now that we had plenty of meat for some time ahead, Rensberg and I took a five days’ patrol up the river beyond a place called Boopa, where there was a waterfall quite pretty, though not very high. The beautiful clear water of the Quito (a fine stream about eighty yards across at this point) falls over a cascade of some forty feet, and the noise is heard for miles around.

A small village of raw but most friendly savages was near-by. The head-man, a jovial customer, brought me a little grain for my boys, and I, thinking both to repay this little courtesy and also replenish our own meat supply, made inquiries

as to the chance of getting buck anywhere handy. Across the river from the kraal was a beautiful big plain which looked a likely place, for the green picking seemed to be coming on well. The headman told us, in answer to our inquiries, that the place would be full of game in the morning, and for further encouragement informed me that there was so much that I would be "*tired out simply firing at it.*" "I suppose," I said, "you get too much meat already"—though, of course, I knew really that they had no means of killing these buck. "Meat!" they cried out; "why, we never even *see* it." "But you do *like* meat?" I queried. "Like it!" they yelled, bounding in the air—"do we like it? Just give us a chance, you will see we shall be on it like hyenas."

As a matter of fact there was plenty of game in the early morning on the big flat, and, to the great delight of the occupants of the little kraal, I shot a couple of sassaby, one of which went to the "hyenas." That night we made our camp at a beautiful spot by the waterfall. The weather all this time was glorious—bright warm days and cold nights; it brought the feeling that it was good to be alive, and I pitied anyone condemned to spend his life in an office in town. "You might as well sit in the *tronk*," * said my old companion.

On getting back to our main camp, we found Lewis nearly well again, and that our first mail and papers had arrived. At that time we had

* *Tronk*, South African prison.

with us a youngster named Mayindoo, whom we had got when we first came to the Quito. He was very black and very ugly, but a smart little boy, who had worked for poor Kajimbo, the murdered Portuguese trader of Cuangar. As Mayindoo was wonderfully quick at understanding us, he became the chief interpreter to the camp, where, with so many different native languages, his services were in demand. As to the native speech : first, there was Sikololo, the Barotze tongue ; then Mombakush, and the Quito river natives’ language, which again varies a good deal from the latter. Rensberg spoke Sikololo well, but not much Mombakush.

We had to take great care of our horses and mules, now that we had no grain for them, our piccaninnies cutting large supplies of grass every evening. The grass we always cut is called locally harangarura—i.e. the grass of the tortoise. It is a beautiful, short, cane grass, resembling the Mitchell grass of Queensland, and, like it, possesses the quality of an excellent feed full of nourishment, even when quite dry and white. This harangarura was the mainstay for our mounts the whole of the time out there.

One afternoon, ugly little Mayindoo, who had been out cutting grass, came back with the report that an animal had passed him in the long grass, and the only description that he could give of it was that it had “ a big head and long tail.” He said he had thereupon climbed a tree, and, after

waiting there a bit, he had returned to report. Two of us promptly went out to see what it might be, and observed three leopards who had just caught and killed a reedbuck. Unfortunately they saw us and bolted across the bush, only giving us a few long, running shots.

CHAPTER V

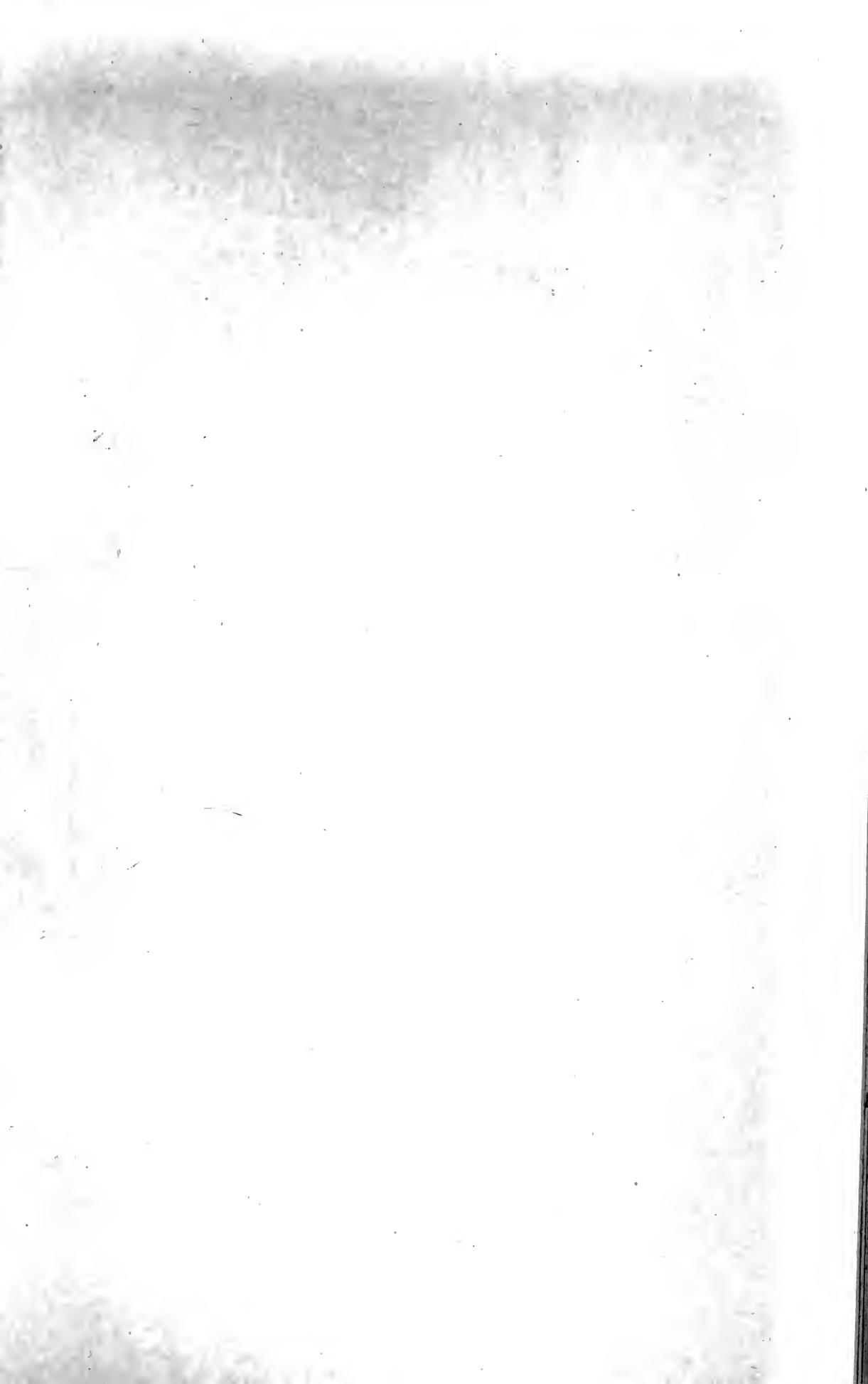
LION STORIES

WE were continually shifting our camps and making patrols in different quarters where investigations were needed. Johnson turned up one evening on a visit, and we had a great talk that night. He told us he had recently seen the tracks where a couple of lions had killed and eaten a zebra. The old stallion had made a great fight for life, the lions apparently not having got a good grip at the start. Mad with pain and fear, the wretched animal had smashed and banged into trees and thorn bushes, plunging and bucking, anything to be rid of those clinging, tearing horrors. Once he actually seemed to have torn free for a few yards, only to be caught and seized again before he could get quite clear; and, in spite of this desperate fight for his life, they got him down in the end.

Johnson also told us a good story of a very big lion he had killed some years ago. (We had rather to coax the yarn out of him, but a good lion story is always worth hearing.) Johnson, it seems, had been shooting high up in Rhodesia, and one afternoon, after he had shot a reedbuck

in some long river grass close to his camp, returned and sent his boys after it. Presently his boys came back saying that the buck was not to be found or had disappeared. After having a drink of tea, and cursing them for their stupidity, he took his boys down to show them where the dead buck was lying ; but, true enough, when he reached there, the buck had disappeared, and had evidently been dragged off by a lion. They followed the spoor, made in the grass by the buck being dragged along, for about forty yards, and then came right on to a big lion at fairly close quarters. Johnson fired straight at him, but the lion bounded off into the reeds apparently unhurt. On looking closer, however, at the place where he had disappeared, a few small drops of blood were visible, which showed that the lion had, at least, been touched. Johnson decided to go back to his camp and get his heavy rifle, a .500 black powder gun with a solid lead bullet. (We had one ourselves in the camp, and a very hard hitting old rifle it was.) Then, picking up all his boys, about eight or ten, he went down to see if he could get another shot at the rascal who had tried to steal his meat. To his surprise, however, even in the short time that he had been away, the lion had come back and had dragged the reedbuck farther out of sight.

Cautiously following up the track, Johnson, for the second time, came right on to the lion, now feeding and tearing hungrily at the meat. The





TURNING WITH A SAVAGE SNARL.

lion was just in the act of turning with a savage snarl and bristling mane when Johnson fired, the big soft bullet smacking in close behind the shoulder and knocking the lion in a sprawling heap. In spite of this, his vitality was so great that he regained his feet and made off through the grass. The spoor showed he was desperately hurt, blood and pieces of lung being coughed up along the track, so Johnson said to his boys, "What shall we do now ; shall we go after him still or will you run away ? " " No," said they, all showing their spears, " we won't run away, master, we will stick to you." This showed pluck on their part, but they were a good class of African, and trusted Johnson as they would have trusted no ordinary white man. Eighty yards off the lion had lain down to die in a clump of bush, but when Johnson and his boys got up to about thirty yards from this, out he came for a last charge, game to the end, growling horribly and striking out with his great forepaws. It was a wasted effort. He could only stagger for half a dozen yards and then collapse, completely finished. This lion stood just under four feet at the shoulder and weighed 440 lb. The first shot had touched his upper lip, cutting it for about two inches ; just enough to put him in a bad temper.

We were discussing what an uncertain beast the lion is, and how impossible it is to count on the behaviour of any individual, when Rensberg told us how a friend of his, John Horne, had been

killed near the Zambezi. John Horne was an experienced old hand, a transport rider and hunter, a splendid shot, and a man who himself in his time had killed not a few lions. Horne was travelling with his wagons at the time this happened, and had just done a morning trek when he saw a herd of hartebeeste close to the road. Telling his boys to outspan the cattle, he started to walk down towards the buck, two of which he presently killed, the boys hearing the shots quite plainly from the wagon. After shooting these two buck, and when only perhaps a few hundred yards from the wagon, he began to walk back towards them, at the same time calling out for the boys to be quick and come for the meat. The boys, having let loose the last of the oxen, then hurried down towards where they had heard his shouting. To their horror, however, they almost ran into a big lion dragging the body of their master towards a bit of bush, stopping at times to lap up some of his blood. They pluckily drove the lion off with yells and sticks, and carried the body back to the wagon, but Horne was quite dead.

What had evidently happened, judging from the wounds, was that the great brute, lying hidden and coolly watching while he shot the hartebeeste, had, as Horne walked back, deliberately and silently, like a great shadow, stalked him, seizing him from behind with one paw across the chest and the other higher up, and thus had killed him instantly with a single bite through the back of



120] LIKE A GREAT SHADOW STALKED HIM, SEIZING HIM FROM BEHIND.



the neck. This particular lion was evidently an unusually daring man-eater, for about this time the same beast was responsible for the deaths of several native women in the neighbouring kraals, who were taken whilst working in their mealie-fields. I believe his career was finally cut short some few months afterwards.

CHAPTER VI

A CAPTURE

THE natives knew us, of course, only by the names they themselves gave us, and these names mainly represented personal characteristics. We once called up Mayindoo for an explanation of what our names all meant. Johnson was "Kapitulo," the man who wears shorts like a policeman ; West was "Saccarima," which I think really means one who walks rather heavily, ploughing along. Mayindoo said it meant, "Badeko moosha kaienda" ("not walk well"). "Santantorra" was Lewis's name, and this meant, according to our interpreter, "Moosha maboie" ("good to the boys")—i.e. does not swear at or get angry with them. "Masitaterro" was Rensberg's, being very similar to Lewis's, and really meaning "the quiet man." My name was "Surumatow," or, as Mayindoo explained, "Neemai kaienda" ("the lion came")—more accurately, "the man whom the lion bit." The one and only Mafoota means, of course, "fat," and poor Sinclair, always a great and tireless walker, had been known as "Inzea" ("the locust").

Johnson, after a day's spell, now went back

towards his own end, Lewis and Rensberg going down with him as far as the junction at Kirrico.

Our next move was down the river some miles to a place which we called Buffalo Camp, because a herd of buffalo, and later on some zebra, rushed amongst our horses and mules which were grazing and stampeded them for several miles. (Talking of zebras, I wonder whether there is much in the theory of protective colouring ; the zebra himself, with the striking marks given by nature, being a great contrast to the tame and artificially bred mule, the latter, of drab colour, with the dark bands down the shoulders and along the back, is peculiarly well protected as far as appearance goes.)

Old Siccumberro, with a considerable retinue, called in one afternoon on his way up the Quito. He had heard news that a nephew had suddenly died whilst high up on the river on a hunting trip, and suspected, as these people always do, foul play by poison. Siccumberro announced that he intended, if he found out that there had been foul play, to bring the culprit down to me for trial. Of course I agreed, though the jurisdiction of the court might be considered somewhat irregular. The trip was to take him thirty days up the river, "unless hunger drove him back," and as a help towards preventing this latter catastrophe, we gave the old boy some spare meat and bones when he left.

After a time our camp was moved back again

to the head of a quiet little moromby (a reed gully), running four or five miles back from the river. At that particular camp Lewis followed up and shot a very large bull eland one morning, a tremendous beast, and enormously fat. This excellent meat, so different from the ordinary buck meat of which we were apt to get very tired, was particularly acceptable just then, as we had for some time been out of all supplies except tea and salt, and could only get flour from the native grains. Sugar was the thing that personally I really missed, and as it is comparatively heavy, unfortunately we often ran short of it.

On coming back from a four days' trip up the river again to Boopa, where I went this time alone to save horse-flesh, and where I had justified a warm welcome from the expectant "hyenas" by managing to shoot a further couple of buck, I learnt that a runner had brought in the news that the German South-West force had surrendered to General Botha, and that our orders now were to join Johnson and West and see if we could find out the whereabouts of Maritz himself.

No sooner had our two comrades turned up from Libebe, than the joint patrol, now five strong, crossed the Quito and cut across the bush to the Okavango. Hitting the old Portuguese wagon track that runs up and down the river, we cut the spoor of some small two-wheeled cart or wagon that had just recently gone down. Both Rensberg and myself thought that this might be

the little cart formerly used by Kajimbo, which must have fallen into the hands of the Germans at Cuangar. In that case, it was more than likely that the wagon would have some Dutch rebels with it. Our boys reported that they heard oxen lowing, and therefore the wagon could not be far ahead.

At daybreak next morning we had found the camp and surrounded the wagon. There was, however, only one white man, but he was one of those we wanted, proving to be W.-S. of Kemp's officers. As we surmised, it was Kajimbo's cart right enough. We also made a couple of fine fat mules, a welcome addition to our riding stock; out in that country anything in the shape of a salted riding animal, horse or mule, being worth its weight in gold regardless of looks. Just as it was said of Klondyke in the early days, "As 'twas in Eden 'tis in Dawson City, where *ANY* girl looks pretty," so it could be said of any four-legged mount on the Okavango. With W.-S. we also collared a mob of mixed cattle which the German police at Kuringkuru were sending down to the German missionaries to be kept on the quiet. Rensberg recognised several of the cattle as formerly the property of Kajimbo and the Portuguese, the whole mob being evidently a "crook" lot, looted by the Germans in their raid on the Portuguese posts in December.

No sooner had we returned to our camp with the prisoner, than a fresh excitement occurred,

some of the boys whom we left in the camp reporting that while we were after the wagon four mounted white men, riding hard, and evidently not noticing our camp, had passed down on the German and opposite side of the river. These, we thought, might probably be a patrol of Botha's troops which had come up by Kuringkuru; but as this was a matter we had to clear up, Johnson and I, mounted on the two newly acquired beasts, decided to follow them up at once. On the second day we got a good crossing in the Okavango without swimming, and followed the tracks of the four horsemen right down to the Yangana mission station. It was vastly puzzling to make out what the four horsemen were doing, for they seemed to be travelling very fast, as though frightened, neither did they seem to have any supply of provisions nor anything except just what they might have on their horses. When we got to the mission station, we came right into a crowd of German soldiers, who seemed more astonished than even we were, and every nigger around the mission, plainly expecting that things were going to be lively, made an immediate rush for shelter. There was nothing to be done, of course, except tie up our mules; and then, putting a bold face on it, we asked them what they were doing there, and whether they were not aware that the Colony had surrendered. They got very excited for a few moments, but soon calmed down, and we began to see how the land lay.

It appeared they were runaways from down below, eight with camels, and the rest horsemen. The camel men had come straight through the dry country from Tsumeb, and did a lot of blowing and boasting as to what they were going to do. They said they were going to get right to German East, fighting their way through. They swore they would never surrender: "We will die rather than give up our rifles. Let the English take us if they can," and that sort of talk. As it happened that both Johnson and I could speak German, we told them not to be fools, and advised them to go back and surrender with the main forces while they had the chance, warning them at the same time, though, of course, without giving them any idea as to what our numbers were, that if they attempted to cross the river they would immediately be fired on. At night we had quite a friendly chat with them and swapped experiences. We could have got away easily enough with their horses, but the camels, the one thing that we thought might give us trouble, were away back in the bush and too well guarded for us to catch sight of them.

The Germans all disappeared during the night, and early next morning Johnson left for Libebe to send word to our authorities. After making sure from the tracks that the Germans had retreated to the sand veld, and had not yet made any attempt to cross the river, I pushed on to re-join the other scouts higher up. On the way I

met four more mounted German troops coming down, one posing as an officer, but doing it none too well. When asked their business, they explained that they were going in from a back post higher up to Grootfontein to surrender there in accordance with their orders. This, of course, from what we had just seen at Yangana, I knew to be a lie, but it seemed safer to let them think one was fooled. These three Germans and their bogus officer had paid our camp a visit, I heard on my return, and had told the same story. The yarn itself was possible enough, but we all put down the sham officer as probably a Dutch rebel. He seemed to know his way about the bush too well to be a German.

Being anxious that none of these runaways should get between us and our Rhodesian border (not that we ever considered that they could really do much actual damage anywhere, but rather for fear that they might create an alarm and cause our authorities a lot of unnecessary worry and expense), we shifted as quickly as possible across the Quito once more. We knew then that, whichever way they came, we should be in a position to head them off. I sent in two runners straight away to Sepango to report what had happened, but mentioned particularly that there need be no alarm, and that I felt sure the five of us could easily handle any party that came up, though it might mean having to shoot their camels and horses first ; that in any case I



MARITZ ON THE RIGHT, KEMP
ON THE LEFT, AND ANOTHER
REBEL LEADER.



MAJOR R. GORDON, D.S.O., AND
INTELLIGENCE SCOUTS.



ANGOLA INTELLIGENCE SCOUTS.



"THE BOYS OF THE OLD BRIGADE."
My askaris and porters when the armistice
came.

was certain the whole thing would fizzle out ingloriously.

It was a question what we were to do with W.-S. As we could neither watch him ourselves nor, of course, put him in the charge of a native, we gave him his parole and left him with his rifles in charge of the camp at Bush-rangers' Rest, with orders to make as much biltong as he could for us. In point of fact, he could hardly run away, and would have been very foolish to have attempted it. As it turned out, he kept his parole very loyally, and was of great assistance later on when shifting camp, etc. Like most of his people, he was a fine hand with a wagon or oxen, a first-class shot, and an excellent all-round man in the bush. Tall and straight in appearance, he was a manly chap too, and altogether it was a pity to see a man like that mixed up with the rebel crowd.

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE TRAIL

BEFORE the whole trip was over, and before we had parted at Bulawayo, we were on quite friendly terms, and I often had a quiet chat with W.-S. concerning the rebellion. He gave me a very interesting account of how Kemp's commandos got through from the Transvaal to join the Germans and Maritz, and he always maintained that the latter was a fine fellow. When he saw me smile, he said, "Of course, I don't expect you to think so." He told me that at first the Germans had made much of them, especially of Maritz, Kemp, and the other rebel leaders. For himself, he had a very poor opinion of the German troops, and of their officers he spoke with great dislike. To a smart Dutchman like W.-S., bred and born in the veld, I can quite imagine how very useless the heavy, stolid German troops must have appeared in such a country as German South-West. The German is generally a poor bushman, and as likely as not gets lost a few hundred yards from his camp if he has no nigger with him.

For Major Franke, W.-S. had no more enthusiasm than had the German soldiers. Franke, he said,

was always telling them that at such and such a place he would make a big stand ; and " then we will see the vultures," said the German commandant. But some reason would make him decide to choose instead another position further back. That would be prepared, and again " we will see the vultures " would be the boast, but again the same thing was still repeated, and a still farther retreat without a fight to yet another position, preparatory, I suppose, " to seeing the vultures."

Leaving W.-S. in charge of our camp, we now pushed down the Quito as rapidly as possible, keeping a good look-out in case the " expedition for German East " might be coming up. We did not care how many of the " Square Heads " might come poking up, so long as we could locate them first, and ascertain their position before they saw us. At the junction we picked up Johnson again, and finding that one of the Germans, the man we knew as the bogus officer, had split from the others and made down the river towards Libebe, Johnson and West went after him, and old Rensberg and I crossed the Quito and Okavango to find out where the main body of these fellows had got to. We found they were all about thirty miles back from the river, camped at some water-holes. From the bushmen we heard that " the tame Ingiraffes " (i.e. camels) were dying, either from weakness or, we thought, perhaps from poison. I made old Yangana come across to see

me, and warned the old chap that if any of his natives assisted these Germans with food or in any other way, I would have "his head for it." But the Germans, retreating like this into the bush, seemed to have earned the contempt of the natives generally, old Yangana saying, "We can all see now that the Germans are frightened of the English." The old chief, however, though I discouraged it, also spoke most contemptuously of the Portuguese, who really must have appeared in a rather invidious light to the natives. Hunted out of all their little forts, leaving four of them without even firing a shot, they had never since put in an appearance on the river, and had apparently left a few Englishmen to do all the work. Johnson and West caught our friend the bogus officer about three days down the river and returned with their prisoner. As we thought, he turned out to be a Dutch rebel, another of Maritz's men, who now went under the assumed name of W.-Z.

Then, before the scouts could join up on a little raid for the camels and horses of the main German party, we heard of the arrival of a Major Gordon, D.S.O., who had come, with two orderlies, direct from Sesheke on a special mission for the capture of Maritz. Johnson and West went off with their prisoner to meet the Major at Bush-rangers' Rest, picking up Lewis on the way. Rensberg and I, who were camped near Yangana, went straight up the Okavango towards Sambiu, where

we had orders to await the Major and the main party.

On the road we got a few shots one morning at a lioness, and I believe my first shot with a hard bullet went right through her, for she made a great fuss and jumped into some reeds and lay down. However, she presently came out and slowly got away into the bush.

The weather had now taken the first really warm turn, and we saw a lot of crocodiles lying on the sand-banks. This river is particularly infested with them, and one brute was so enormous that even old Rensberg said he had never seen such a whopper, even in the Zambezi. At quite close quarters he appeared to be almost thirty feet, though I suppose fourteen feet would be nearer the mark. "My God!" said the old Dutchman, after a good look, "is he not an awfully beggar?" and he certainly was! The old man gave him "a good shot," and after thrashing about for a few seconds, the monster dragged himself off into deep water. Rensberg reckoned that even an elephant, if this croc. had got hold of him, "would have to pull good to get free, or else he wouldn't *make it.*"

A little beyond Sambiu we awaited the arrival of our officer, who, curiously enough, was also a Queenslander by birth, whom I had known personally before. A great man was Major Gordon, without the slightest bit of side, and as manly and gallant a leader as one could wish for. The

country and people were a little strange to him, but he was awfully keen on capturing Maritz, the arch-rebel. We scouts gravely doubted whether there was much chance of getting Maritz : for one thing, our crowd had become too big to be handy.

As it happened, we heard almost at once of a party of white men with wagons, said to be near Bunja on the German side of the river, and these men proved to be a detachment of S.A.M.R.—a splendid lot of fellows, who had come up to the river, via Kuringkuru, from Grootfontein. They brought the official news that Maritz had been arrested by the Portuguese, and that meant the end of the Major's mission and our return down the river.

The scouts were a little disappointed at being unable to pay a visit to Hawonga, the Ovambo chief at Kuringkuru, a visit we five had originally planned together ; the disappointment was the greater, as some time previously we had sent Hawonga a message promising to come shortly to see if he had really been concerned in the murder of Kajimbo and his family, and promising further, in the event of our finding him guilty, to hang him. On the return journey the three of the old Dutch Patrol, Rensberg, Lewis, and myself, kept to the Portuguese side, while the others followed the German track.

Four days later, just at dark, word reached us that a party of Germans, with camels and horses, had slipped through and made up the Quito.

We at once sent a messenger back to inform the Major, who was a day farther back, and the three of us started at daybreak in pursuit, leaving behind everything not absolutely necessary in order to travel as lightly as possible. With old Rensberg leading, we cut across the bush between the two rivers, hit the Quito again that evening, and soon saw, from there being both camel and horse spoor about four days old going up-stream, that the natives had reported correctly.

That evening, whilst camp was being made, I went half a mile ahead to keep a look-out and watched two big koodoo bulls come down to water together. It was a fine sight to see them stalking to the river, occasionally stopping to look round and listen or to butt at each other playfully with their long graceful horns. At nightfall several lions started roaring quite close to the camp, and they kept me in some anxiety ; our fires were not very big, and a stampede or accident with our horses and mules, at any rate before we had caught the runaways ahead of us, we did not want.

Lying awake, it was curious to notice how indifferent our mounts were to this unpleasantly loud noise ; even " Major," my own pony, a most nervous and highly strung little fellow, took no interest in the lions, then making their presence known to all the world, though, of course, he never got their wind.

The pursuit of the Germans took us about eight

days. As each day brought us nearer, the spoor of the "tame ingiraffe" becoming fresher and fresher, our boys began to get rather scared and to give trouble, so we had to kick the two ring-leaders out of the camp, *pour encourager les autres*. After this we had no further trouble. Tucker ran a bit short, for though game was plentiful, we were anxious, as we got near the party ahead, not to shoot, lest we should alarm the Germans and so give them warning of our approach. We knew we should have them right enough, so long as they did not see or hear us first: forewarned, they might have turned the tables on us. The seventh day of the chase we came up quite close to them, and that very night a messenger arrived in camp from Major Gordon, who, with four men, was not far behind. Both the Germans and ourselves had then crossed the river. That same night we surrounded the Germans' camp, only to find that they had made a further short trek ahead of us. In the morning Major Gordon arrived, after a quick thirty-mile ride, and the whole party followed the spoor straight on. Two Germans were taken in a canoe on the river, and the remainder were surrounded and surprised in their camp. After some demur, they came out and surrendered, though one very sulky individual tried to change his mind and picked up a rifle; it only needed a prod in the stomach with the muzzle of a Lee-Enfield to convince him that the game was up.

Thanks to the Major, the duties of guarding our

prisoners on the 700-mile journey before us was not a very onerous one. They were simply allowed to keep together with their own camp and camels, and told to travel along a few miles either ahead or behind our party. Without arms, they were quite helpless, and could neither run away nor attempt any tricks. All we had to do was to set a watch on our own camp at night. Game was plentiful enough along the river, and we easily kept the camp in meat on the way back.

It was on this journey that, early one morning, we saw a most interesting and exciting coursing match : a leopard pursuing some young reedbuck. I was surprised that the leopard could continue the chase for so long : it must have been for at least several hundred yards. When we lost sight of the hunt he was still close up to the last buck, hoping, each bound, to seize it with his front claws. We also saw the biggest eland I have yet seen : a huge bull with a small herd of cows with him. Unfortunately, just as Lewis, who was ahead, stalking him, was about to fire, one of those ill-natured sassaby, " whose eyes are stronger than what looking-glasses are," gave the alarm and frightened the eland away.

It took us some ten days to work back to the Bush-rangers' Rest, and there Johnson left the party, West having previously returned home from the Okavango before the last chase had started. After a day's spell to fix things up, we started again on the road for Livingstone

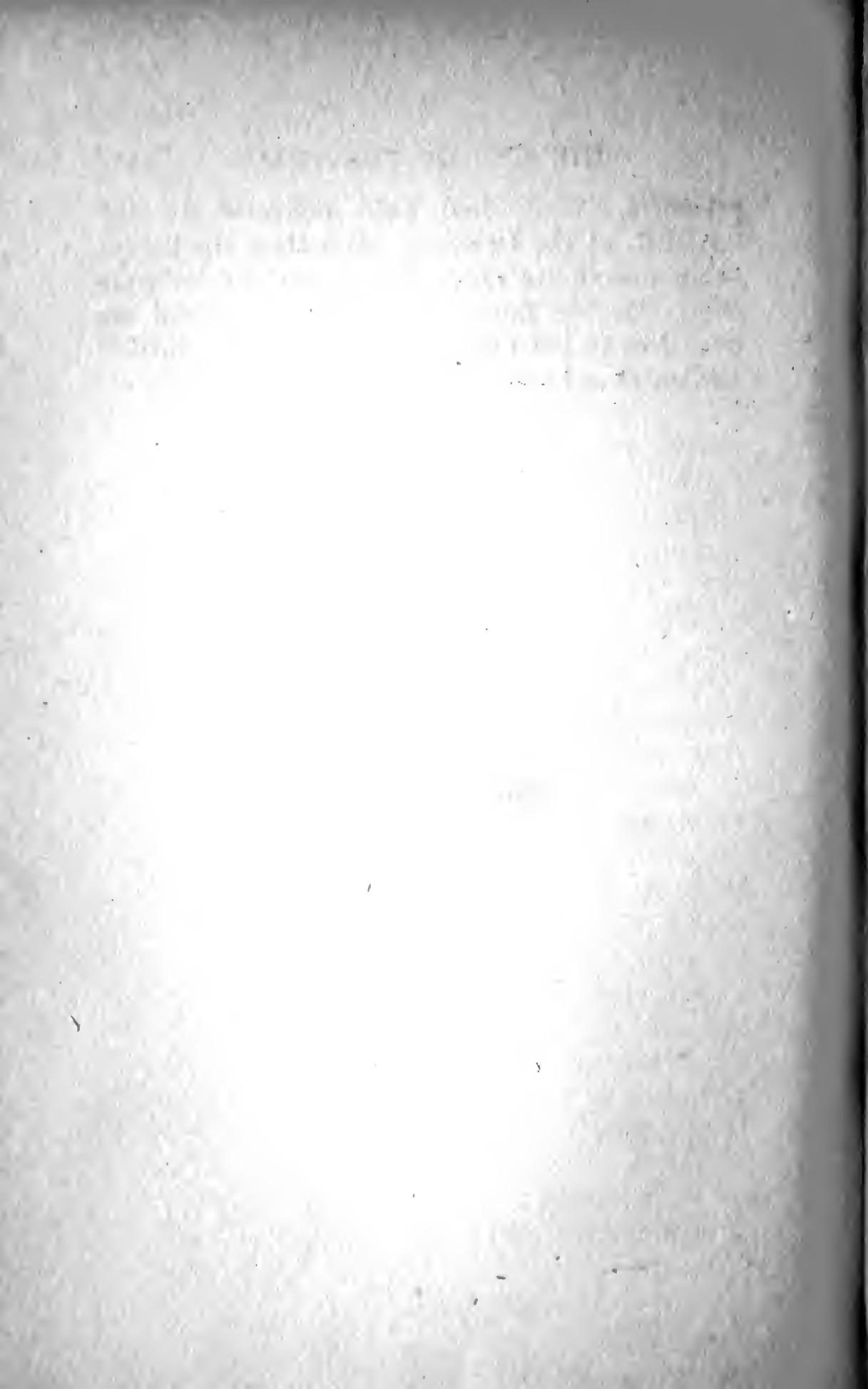
with the prisoners. W.-S. drove the little wagon (originally Kajimbo's), and the Major, wisely, took a dozen spare oxen out of the mob we had captured on the Okavango, to kill for beef on the way, thus saving any delay to hunt game. The balance of the captured cattle were left in Siccumberro's charge.

Owing to the scarceness of water it was necessary to cut straight across on to the Lumuno, a branch of the Luiyanna, and then run the latter down again to the Quandoo. We had easy but unexciting times. Our commanding officer was more a big brother to the party than anything else, and literally shared his last biscuit amongst his men.

Being the interpreter, I often had a quiet chat with the prisoners. They told me that their first idea had been to break straight across Rhodesia to German East, but on finding themselves watched by British Scouts directly they hit the Okavango, they became disheartened, and a good many of them had returned to surrender to the Union forces farther south. Of course, the Scouts were pleased that these odd rebels and little parties of Germans had tried to come through, because we felt that it justified our existence out there. Personally, too, I felt gratified that the warning I had written in the previous December had proved well grounded.

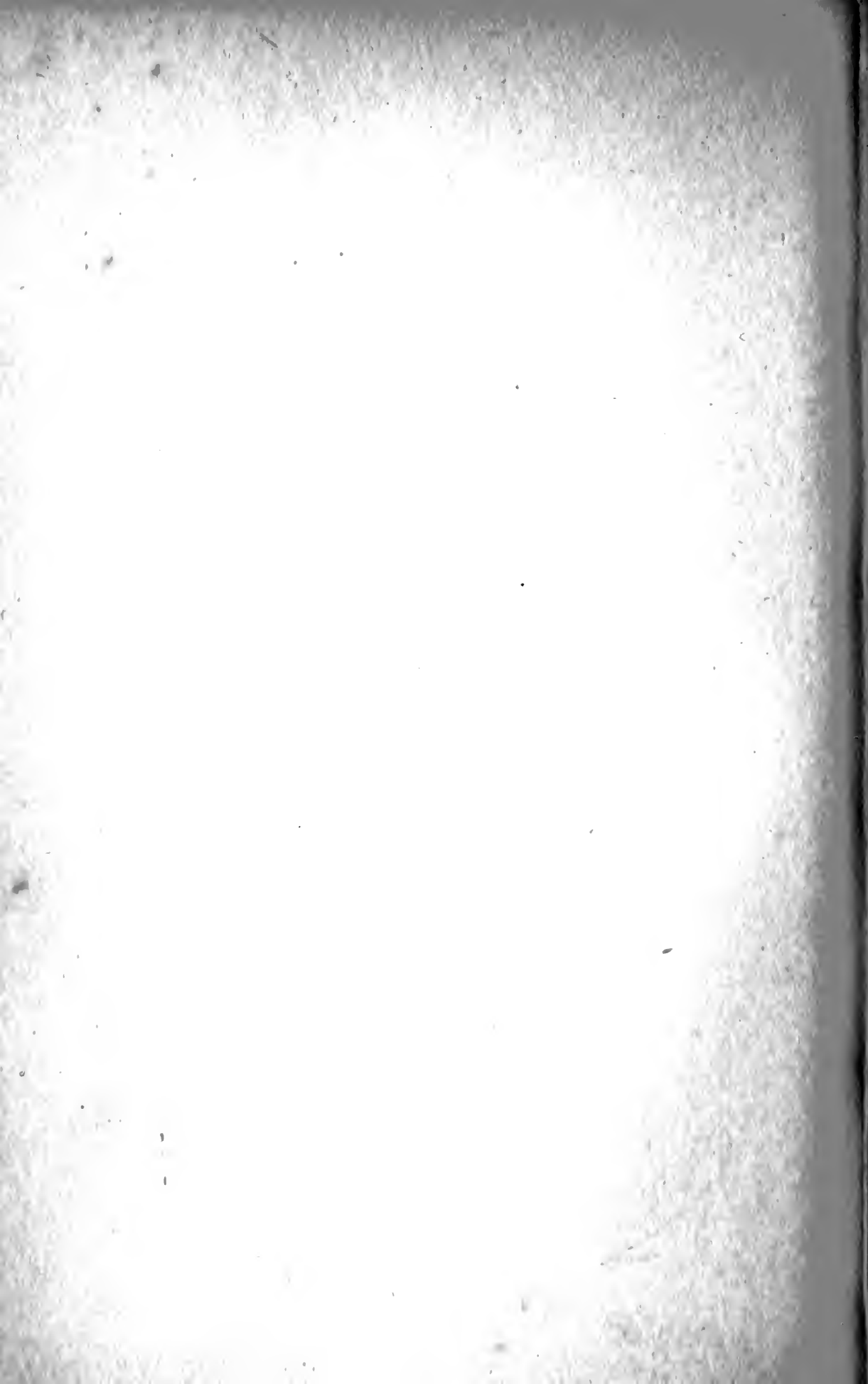
For two months we were travelling before we reached Livingstone, and handed over our nine

prisoners. W.-Z. had been delivered to the S.A.M.R. at the Okavango, and thus, the border being now quite clear, the Scouts' duties were over. Having finished our job, we found we were free to get our discharges and seek further service elsewhere.



PART III

WAR: CAMPAIGNING IN EAST AFRICA



CHAPTER I

WITH THE E.A.M.R.

IT was in the hope of getting to Mesopotamia that Lewis and I left Cape Town for Bombay, thence to headquarters at Delhi. But at Delhi we were told that there was little doing in Mesopotamia, and that only men able to navigate river-boats and motor-launches were wanted. We were offered employment in East Africa instead, and knowing that B.E.A. would probably mean a speedy death for our horses, it was with regret that we gave up the thought of the Euphrates Valley.

Bearing in mind the old stoic teaching, "If you can't get what you like, like what you get," in a short time we duly found ourselves landing at Mombassa. From Mombassa we were immediately railed up to Kagiado, and from there we had three days' ride to join our unit, the East African Mounted Rifles, at Longido. For three whole days we rode through beautiful cattle country—a country clothed with fine-looking blue grasses: a heavy stocking country too. But beautiful though it appeared, there was "death in the pot," for horse sickness was prevalent. Game of all

kinds abounded and lions were plentiful, for all that country had been previously a game reserve.

On this trip we caught our first view of "Kilimanjaro," a wonderfully beautiful mountain, and one of the most glorious sights of Africa—a sight that never stales. At Longido, which was just across the border of the German territory, we found our unit, the E.A.M.R., a regiment composed of East African settlers who, on the outbreak of war, had immediately come in from all directions from their various farms, armed, in many cases, only with sporting rifles, and bringing with them their own mules and boys. Now these volunteers were a first-class lot of men, and if they had been kept in something like their original state, they would have been invaluable in the early stages of a campaign as irregular mounted infantry, for the Germans had no similar troops to oppose them. The mistake was in trying to turn them into regular troops.

To such an absurdity had this been carried, that I was told lances had actually been issued to some of them. They were not wanting in first-class officers, the right men for leading raiding parties : such a man, for instance, as Major Clifford Hill, an ideal leader of mounted irregulars. In spite of this mistake, the E.A.M.R. did valuable work during the early part of the campaign, when the British strength in East Africa was far from having the predominance in men and armaments it obtained later on. Personally, I liked the

E.A.M.R. men immensely, and am proud to have been enrolled with them; but it is certain that for the reason stated, they were never made use of as they should have been.

Two companies of the 17th Indian Cavalry were also in camp; good men and splendidly trained soldiers, but the shocking thing was that every night, no matter where they camped, they made a hideous noise, which could be heard for miles, hammering in their iron picket pegs. They all had Australian horses, mostly Queenslanders, and I noticed many old friends amongst their brands. From this camp on the side of the Longido mountain we had a splendid view of Kilimanjaro, and in the morning especially, clad in "the roseate hues of early dawn," it looked magnificent.

The usual rumours of great variety pervaded the camp. On one day alone the following, amongst others, provoked discussion :

No. 1. 20,000 Australians have landed at Mombassa.

No. 2. The E.A.M.R. owe Nazarus (Indian storekeeper) 40,000 rupees.

The great South African Expeditionary Force, which had taken some months to organise and train, was now declared ready for action, and General Smuts having arrived at the front, the big advance from B.E.A. began. Our Longido division, in itself a very formidable one, with

many guns, took but a minor part in the advance on Moshi, the terminus of the Tanga line, and the first objective of the forward movement. The main fighting fell upon the division under General Smuts himself, who was working on the other and eastern side of Kilimanjaro and along the McTou line. The Germans put up a hard day's fighting along a line of low hills of which Latima and Riata were the principal heights, but finally they had to abandon their positions and fall back, no doubt according to a long-prepared plan, to a position near Kahe.

The chief part taken by the E.A.M.R. in these operations was a trip through the bush to cut the railway line south of Moshi. This was done successfully enough, but as it was at least twenty-four hours after the last German train had passed, it was hardly a very valuable performance. (Personally, I remember the work, because a couple of swarms of bees put up a very severe offensive against us, inflicting much discomfort on men and horses.) Our division now joined up with General Smuts' forces, and the troops moved on to attack Von Lettow's position at Kahe, where he was coolly waiting for us. The evening before the fighting at Kahe itself the Germans attempted a night attack on our (General Sheppard's) brigade. About seventy or eighty crept quite close up to the camp, and from about 8 p.m. till 1 o'clock in the morning fired into it at close range. Apparently, a considerably bigger force also came out

to the attack, but either were purposely kept back to await the result of the smaller party's effort, or else got bushed in the dark amongst the scrub and palm trees between the two forces ; anyhow, they seemed to spend most of the night blowing bugles in the distance.

Afterwards, when I was a prisoner, the Germans told me that the idea was to try and stampede the Indian troops by that night attack. As it turned out, the Indian troops were quite steady, and the heavy maxim fire of some of the Indian regiments must have destroyed most of that small party of Germans, for many of their askaris were lying dead in front of the camp in the morning. A German officer, who it was evident had bravely led the attack, was found dead in the morning within a few yards of one of our maxim pits. Our brigade had but few losses that night, the enemy firing consistently too high.

Next day came the fight at Kahe, and our regiment saw but little of the fighting, for we had only three or four casualties. During the morning, I was sent on with another trooper with a message, and, coming back, we stood watching the Fusiliers pass by on their way up to reinforce the firing line. These were originally recruited from the Legion of Frontiersmen, volunteers who always had a full share of any fighting that was going. Certainly, when it came to fighting, there was never any doubt about the good old "Boosiliers," as they were nicknamed. The Fusiliers halted as

they came opposite us, and an officer, a man with a greyish beard and felt hat, carrying a sporting rifle, stepped out under a shady tree. Speaking to his men, he said, "Fall out, boys, and come under the shade out of the sun; we may perhaps be here for some little time." He was easy to recognise, that officer—had not I read and loved every one of his books?—F. C. Selous.

That day I also had to go across to a King's African Rifles battalion, which was with our brigade. Great fellows were those original K.A. Rifles. Alas! there were not many of them or their white officers alive by the end of the campaign. Another incident that day remains in my memory. The Germans were firing with one of the 4.1 guns off the *Königsberg* more or less all day, and their shells made a lot of noise but did mighty little damage. When one burst somewhere in the vicinity, not really too close, at the noise of the explosion a native, who was leading two mules with water-tanks alongside us, got such a fright that he fell flat beneath one of his mules. He looked so comical that I could not help laughing at him; whereupon the nigger, catching my eye and seeing my expression, immediately broke into a grin himself and jumped up, ready to enjoy the joke also. The negro is not overburdened with nerves, and hence, when trained, makes a first-class soldier.

After a hard fight all day (during which General V. Deventer, attempting with a large force of

horsemen to get round the German position by a flanking movement, had been held off by the enemy), the German leader at nightfall, with considerable skill, withdrew his companies intact and unbeaten. He had, however, to abandon to our troops the big 4.1 naval gun, which, being fixed on a semi-permanent cement foundation, could not be moved quickly enough.

On joining the E.A.M.R. we had been attached to a small party of twelve scouts taken from the whole of the regiment, and in those days I remember our greatest joy was to take a message in or up to General Sheppard. It was a real pleasure to observe how coolly he always handled his brigade in action, and to find, no matter how occupied, how courteously he always spoke to any messenger. To see the General so perfectly cool under fire was a lesson. Later on General Sheppard became Chief of the General Staff in East Africa, a position he held right till the end, and no one, I suppose, carried a bigger share of the worry and responsibility of that trying campaign. Some of his admirers, however, would like to have seen him a little less tolerant of the vast horde of "base wallahs" that seemed to collect in East Africa towards the end of the campaign.

After Kahe came a hurried trip to Arusha, through which General V. Deventer's troops soon followed, on the way to Condoa Irangi, surrounding, on the march, a German company at Loi Kissale. This force, comprising about seventeen

whites and ninety askaris, had to surrender after putting up a fight for some days on the mountain. The success, insignificant though it seems, was acceptable enough in those days. The wet season was now setting in, and great numbers of horses and mules began to die daily from horse sickness. Out of the twenty-two scouts, no less than eighteen died, and the only animals that seemed to survive were the little Somali mules ; but even they were not absolutely immune.

From Arusha we went by road back to Kagiado, and thence right round by rail to a big camp at Mbuni. There the E.A.M.R. found their camp once more alongside our old friends of the 17th Indian Cavalry, whose Australian horses seemed to have suffered less than most. " Your regiment and ours are one," said an Indian trooper in his pleasure at seeing us again.

CHAPTER II

INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

At the end of the wet season things began to stir again, and another big move south was predicted in the near future. It was at this time that Lewis and myself joined the Intelligence Department, four other of the E.A.M.R. scouts leaving to join the I.D. with us. We had to thank Colonel O'Grady, then Chief of the Staff to General Hoskins, always a good friend to us, for getting us transferred into this new work and unit, for then began the happiest and most interesting part of our war service in East Africa. From the first minute of joining the I.D., all our time and work was a source of joy and delight. We had till the finish of the campaign the best of chiefs to work under, and were always splendidly treated, and, I think I might say, trusted. Probably we may often have deserved censure, but never during the whole time in the I.D. did we receive anything akin to a reprimand.

My first job as an I.D. was a nine days' trip with one white companion, S. Williams, and three askaris to Same Gap in the Impare Hills. We had to cross a very dry bit of country, and it was

necessary to pack a mule with water-tanks for some way and then send it back, leaving a little supply of water in a hole lined with my oil-sheet. We had about twenty miles' walk during the night before reaching the gap, and we spent the following day in a patch of wild sisal on a little hill overlooking the German pickets. At dark next night we started on the return journey, arriving soon after daylight the following morning at the place where we had planted the water. There we had an unpleasant surprise, for a wretched hyena had in the meantime found our plant, and, pulling away the sticks covering it, had dragged out my oil-sheet, in which he had eaten several large holes. The water, of course, was gone. The question was, could I declare a ground-sheet eaten by a hyena as one "lost in action," and so claim a new one? A second question arose: Did the hyena indulge in one of his good laughs on the completion of his little practical joke? As we found water in a little pool some miles farther on, not much harm was done.

Both Williams and I were then very fit, and I think we must have walked a clear thirty miles straight off on the return journey. On this little trip we twice saw elephants very close, and on one occasion we stopped and had a good look at a large bull standing quite near to us in the thorn bush. The big columns were already in motion on the southern advance on our return; our division, the 1st, under General Hoskins, moving

down the Pangani, whilst the main German force fell back with little fighting along the railway line. Near a German bridge, on the Pangani, there was a half-hearted attempt by a few companies to hold up our column, another of the *Königsberg's* naval guns, this time fired from a truck on the railway, shelling our transport during the afternoon. In the evening someone told me, using his own peculiar classification, that the total casualties amongst the transport had only been "a horse, a mule, an ox, a nigger, and a *South African*."

Next day we went into the Buiko, passing a smashed-up engine and train of the enemy's on the railway. We were never quite sure to whom the credit of this lucky shot was due. Was it the result of a bomb from an aeroplane or of a shell from a little Indian mountain battery, one of the best trained and disciplined units in our force? At any rate, the wrecked train and graves alongside were a satisfactory sight from our point of view—a "pretty" sight in the sense of the old man who said that he always thought "a murder and suicide made *very pretty reading*."

From Buiko, where the column halted, Lewis and I, with a third Intelligence agent, "Buster" Brown, were sent towards Handeni, our duty being to work round through the dry bush country on the right of the column. The first night we met and, after some palaver, made friends with a party of Kwafi, who are really a kind of bastard

Masai. They always looked exactly like the ordinary Masai to us ; at the same time, there must be some considerable tribal difference, for the Kwafi always impressed on us "Sisi habana Masai" ("We are not Masai"). These Masai tribes have at last solved the problem, confessedly difficult for most of us, how to have your cake and eat it, for they live mostly on milk and blood, the latter being obtained by daily bleeding certain of their cattle, who are, of course, none the worse for this treatment. The Masai have always had rather a formidable name, but I think as fighting men they have been much overrated, and, personally, I regard them as great cowards. Small parties of German askaris, not more than six or eight, would commandeer and remove their cattle wholesale, without the Masai making any serious attempt to check them, and it is well known that the one sore point with all native peoples is, the interference with either their live stock or women, particularly the former.

That night we had a long talk with the Kwafi, who agreed to supply us with guides for our trip. Our camp was about 400 yards from the village in the thick bush, and in the middle of the night some lions cut a big calf out of the Masai cattle kraal, or else found it outside, and began to drive the wretched animal, as mischance would have it, in our direction. It seemed that there were one or more cubs trying their hand at killing, for they were nearly an hour playing with and mauling

the poor beast, and the unhappy calf kept up a great bellowing all the time. Finally they dispatched it only a short distance away from our camp. All this kept us awake, for the lions were so occupied with their sport that there was the chance that they might come slap upon us.

On the way to Handeni we passed a camp in the bush made by Captain LaFontaine, one of our Intelligence men, who some time previously had made a venturesome trip to a German tramway running to Handeni. The third day out, by sheer bad luck, we nearly walked right into a small party of German askaris in some thick country, and both sides cleared into the bush and lost sight of each other. After this we decided that Lewis, with one of our Kwafi and the mules, should be sent back to a camp to await us at a spot arranged between our guides, whilst Brown and I should go on a couple of days farther to Handeni. After we had picked up Lewis on the return journey, we struck the column that had first started moving south in time to see the little fight at Makalamo bridge, where a few German companies again held us up in a very awkward position adjoining the Pangani. This was really their last effort on the Tanga railway, which then fell into our hands.

From Makalamo, the same three of us, with four askaris and the two Kwafi guides of our previous trip, started out on the right, our objective this time being to find out what was

going on in the Kiberaschi district, where there was supposed to be one German company. For some days we had very bad water, and a day's march from Kiberaschi Lewis fell sick with fever, and we had to leave him planted in some thick bush near a little water-hole. Brown and I proposed to take three out of the four askaris with us ; but the first man we picked said he was sick, the second man complained of feeling ill, the third man said his feet were sore, while the fourth, on being told he was to come with us, thinking apparently that the supply of excuses was exhausted, immediately threw down his rifle and bolted off through the thorn bush. By that time I felt pretty mad, and so I knelt down to have a steady shot at the flying figure. But Brown, who always had the coolest head of us three, said, "Don't shoot," and sent the two guides after him.

The Kwafi, of course, soon ran him down and brought him back, and I remember that a lengthy and heated argument followed. I insisted that the man was a useless coward, that we were better off without him, and that on no account would I agree to take him. Brown was equally emphatic, maintaining that if this man were allowed to remain, all the other askaris would naturally play the same game. The argument was at its height when we struck on a happy conclusion. We decided the askari should be made to come, but his rifle and bandolier were to be taken from him,

and he was to be given the load of our things to carry and turned into a *pagasi* (porter).

All that night we walked, and at daylight next morning found ourselves on a hill overlooking a German boma. The enemy, however, had just evacuated it, and were camped some few miles back in the hills, where we could see their fires ; two or three small parties passed close during the morning. In the evening we had a walk through their former camp, which must have held about 10 whites and 100 blacks ; it still contained about 50 unfit porters, left behind in a terribly emaciated state. The local inhabitants were friendly to us, and we spent the next day in hiding by the side of the big Kiberaschi road which runs to the west. We failed to catch anybody, and, being anxious about Lewis, walked back all that night through the bush to find him at daybreak just where we had left him. He was none too well, but able to ride, so from there we rode back to Kiberaschi again, and paid a visit to a big German rubber plantation at a place called Kwedi Boma. The fine homestead there had been left as if the owner had just gone out for a walk. We entered the house without hesitation, and inside helped ourselves to many necessities, particularly quinine, of which we were badly in need, for we were, all three, more or less suffering from fever that day. Not daring to stay very long, and having learnt that the German overseer, a Goanese, had been cutting trees and falling them across the Kandeni

road as obstacles to any British motors, we col-lared him and took him along with us, the most wretched-looking prisoner you ever saw. We camped that night about a mile from Kwedi Boma, and in the middle of the night our prisoner came alongside me. I could hear him stirring about, and on my asking him what was the matter, "Please," he said, "can I go home and say my prayers?" This was about 1 a.m., so he was told rather forcibly that he could not. Two days afterwards we got Lewis, who had a bad attack of fever, sent to the hospital at Handeni, whilst Brown and I worked round, and finally joined up with our column at a place afterwards known as Shell Camp. We had been away nineteen days.

We left Shell Camp about June 24 on what proved to be the longest and last trip we three were to make together. There were practically no rations obtainable, the whole column living from hand to mouth on what was brought up daily from the rear. All we could rake up was half a bag of *posho*, eight tins of bully beef, and a couple of pounds of coffee, but we knew we should manage somehow, for if "old soldiers never die," neither do "old bushmen ever starve." Taking with us a mule each, two pack-mules, and four I.D. askaris, we soon got clear of the column and worked round, cutting the Handeni road, which the enemy was still using, for they had a big camp a few miles below where we crossed it; parties of their askaris, who had been cattle raiding

from the Masai, were continually coming back. The natives were friendly, and guided us safely. We always told them we were just the eyes of the big columns of English, looking out for water and roads, and that the big Safaris would soon be coming to eat up the Germans.

The work was interesting and care was necessary. It was usually hard to get natives to take notes back to our chief, though they were willing to guide us, each taking his turn for a day or so, and then handing us over to others. They naturally disliked the job of taking our information back to the columns, for they feared to be caught carrying a note by the enemy, which meant being promptly hanged.

We next worked through another chain of German outposts running south from a round mountain called Geira. It was near there that a rather amusing incident happened. Brown, being in front, had stopped and questioned some natives at a small kraal, and as I rode up I noticed, when about 100 yards off, one of the natives (the jumbe, as it happened) speak to a youth, who immediately ran off up the slope and disappeared. On reaching Brown I asked why the deuce that nigger had been sent off in such a hurry. Brown said he had not noticed him. "Well, I did," was my answer, and told him (he was the only one who could then speak Swahili decently) to ask the headman why he had sent the boy away like that. "Why," said the jumbe quite innocently, "there

is a post of two white men and some askaris just over the hill, and I sent to tell them that you are coming to see them and are quite close." We were not long in concluding our interview and getting away into some thick bush again. In those days we still wore our old E.A.M.R. scout felt hats, so the natives on first acquaintance generally took us for Germans.

We were now working round in a south-west and southerly direction towards the German Central Railway. Tucker was not very plentiful just about then ; still, we generally got something or other each day to keep us going. At one small village I well remember buying, cooking, and eating five great pumpkins, the only food procurable, for our daily meal. The little camp in the bush to which we had retired with our prey must have astonished anyone who may have seen it afterwards, with its heaps of pumpkin rind.

CHAPTER III

A CAPTURE

WHEN about eighteen days out, and after having turned more east, we came close to the German line of communications between their main army at Turiani and their principal depot at Kimomba on their Central Railway. That night we camped in the bush close to the barabara (main road), which we crossed at daylight next morning, to lay up in some thick stuff close to the road. The barabara was evidently being greatly used, and a telephone ran along it. Soon after daybreak big processions of porters began to pass along the road towards the German camp, which must have been about thirty miles ahead; various mobs of pack-donkeys, with Greeks in charge, were also passing, but only an odd askari. All this we watched from the bush, and then decided to go round and cut the road a bit higher up and try our luck at some bush-ranging. Accordingly, about a mile up we left two askaris and our mules in the bush, and then crept close to the road, where bush and long grass ran right up to the track. We struck this point on the temporary

halt of a great number of porters, who were all singing and clapping their hands.

Stepping into the road, we walked up towards them. As usual, with our felt hats (I always wore a beard too), we were mistaken for Germans. An askari guard, jumping up from the side of the road, saluted me with "Jambo Bwana." "Jambo Askari," I replied, and then in execrable Swahili, "Why do you not clean your rifle?" taking it at the same time from the astonished-looking man. He was at once put in charge of one of our two askaris, and with the other I started after the long line of porters, who were now swinging away up the road with their loads. Shouting and cursing at them in German, I got these puzzled fellows to turn back with their loads, while Lewis and Brown, stopping the porters as they came back, made a big fire and kept throwing the loads on to it as they arrived. As fast as the porters were relieved of their loads, they were made to collect more and more wood for the bonfire. There were loads of various things: clothing from Europe, cases of schnapps and vinegar, bags of rice, beans, flour, and other native foods, also about twenty loads of sugar.

After going up about a mile, I found there was a break in the line of porters, but by shouting I got some of those who were still in front to turn back with their loads. Then came another break, and by that time, being over a mile up the road away from Brown and Lewis, I got frightened, and

returned, hurrying up the rear porters. Of course, when the porters reached my two comrades and saw their loads thrown on to the bonfire, they realised what had happened. Ingreza ! We had cut the telephone wire. The last load of all was a bag of sausages, a great prize indeed to hungry men ; keeping this and the prisoner, we then cleared. The porters we left gaping on the road, and, checking the tendency of some of them to follow us, we generously, on behalf of their real masters, gave them all permission to disperse to their own homes and districts. As a matter of fact they all went back in a great mob to their depot, where, I have no doubt, they told their German masters a wonderful account of their adventure. We had burned, I fancy, a good 200 loads, and, as we hoped, " stirred the possum " at the German Headquarters when they learned there of the attack on their communications. We also hoped a little raid like this might force them in future to detail more askaris from the front to guard their convoys.

CHAPTER IV

THE HUNTER HUNTED

THE job being completed, we wasted no time ourselves in getting back through the bush, picking up our mules and clearing out in an easterly direction. We travelled fast all that afternoon and struck water late at night, cooking some food and then going on another hour in the moonlight before camping. We intended, of course, to stick to the bush, thick bush if possible, but next day, after travelling hard till one o'clock, we were still without water, and had not seen any natives. We were forced, therefore, during the afternoon to swing back towards the Vami river, which we reached before evening. We by no means liked doing this, for the villages were thick all along the river; still, we had to get water. We camped and cooked food close to the river, and we saw various natives, from whom we tried to get both guides for ourselves and messengers to go back to the column. They made us promises they would supply these early next morning. We did not, however, remain camped that night in the same spot, but after the natives had all gone

we moved off and camped about three-quarters of a mile off. We should have gone farther on.

That night I felt very anxious and hardly slept. There was bright moonlight, and about four in the morning, lying awake in my blanket, I heard whistling some way off. It appeared to me as if someone was trying to locate our camp and expecting to get an answer from it. Jumping up immediately, I shook and woke Brown and Lewis. "Look out," I said, "there seem to be natives trying to locate us; it may be the natives promised for guides and messengers, but it seems too early, and I don't like it. Better get ready to get out of this quick." Grabbing my rifle and bandolier, I went out towards where one could hear at intervals the whistling in the distance, to see what could be made of it. I worked around, and the whistling began to get nearer.

To cut a long story short, I found myself in a short time between two small parties of German askaris; we started to shoot at each other at close range, but in moonlight. I soon got the worst of it, receiving a bullet through my bandolier and a wound near the hip, and cleared out, to discover that I was on the bank of the river; I had not realised I was so close. To save myself from being surrounded, in I had to go; the water was quite warm, and, after partly wading and partly swimming for a couple of hundred yards or so (besides having to rescue my old felt hat, which started floating off on its own), I got out on the

same side again and started to work back toward where I imagined the camp to have been.

For some reason the Germans had not followed me up or it would have been all over with me, for it was very bright moonlight, and, in addition, almost daybreak. My head would have been a fine substitute for a ginger-beer bottle for some target practice in the water. Later, at Morogoro, when a small mob of Germans came round me to inspect the notorious prisoner, an officer amongst them asked me where I had hidden myself. "Did you stick yourself away in the grass," he said. "No," I said, "I jumped into the river. But how was it" (asking him something in his turn) "that your men did not come and finish me off when in the water?" Looking a bit sheepish before the other Germans, he replied, "We did not have our old veld askaris with us."

In the meantime Brown and Lewis, with three out of the four askaris and most of the old boys, just got out of camp in time, abandoning everything except their rifles and bandoliers. As they left, another party of the enemy began firing into the camp, probably at the mules, which were still tied up. Lewis and Brown and the askaris wasted no time, but wisely made off straight away, and after six thin days in the bush—days when they had several narrow escapes from running into parties of the enemy on the look-out for them—they managed to work right back through the German pickets into our own column, which was

still camped at Shell Camp, where we had left it a month before.

After getting out of the river I picked up one of our own askaris, a young Wakamba rejoicing in the name of Jambo, and we two lay up that day not far from the camp of the night before in some scrub. Till about midday the enemy were poking about in the neighbourhood, and we could hear them talking. That night we too cleared out with the intention of working round to try and get back to the column. As a matter of fact, we really followed very much the same direction and track that Lewis and Brown had taken (not that we knew it at the time), and were always a day or so behind them. The greater part of one day we waited lying up in the bush close to the big German road that runs direct from Kidete to Morogoro, a road which the enemy were then using infrequently. The wound in the hip, though but a slight one, became very sore from the continual walking and rubbing in the tall and long grass, and I hoped we might have found a rider of some sort—perhaps carrying a message—on a mule or donkey, which I could have ridden, and thereby obtained relief from the continual irritation. As it was, the askari and myself travelled mostly by night, getting green mealies, then luckily in season, from the native *shambas* (cultivation patches), and in the daytime lying up and sleeping in the grass or bush.

On the fifth evening we arrived, tired and very

hungry, at a native kraal, and we knew we must be somewhere near both the English and German main camps. From the headman of the little kraal we got some eggs and native *posho*,* and a promise that at daylight he would lead us round next day to the English camp, which we should reach, he said, in the afternoon. In the meantime, however, our friend (unnoticed by us, though we were not unsuspicious) had managed to send out a messenger to the German main camp, which was perhaps less than six or seven miles away.

Next morning at daylight we set off with our supposed friendly guide, and after travelling about an hour or more on a small native track, we almost ran into a German patrol of two whites and a number of blacks. We only just saw them in time, and before they saw us we bolted into the bush; evidently they were on the look-out for us. In making my escape, I lost sight of poor Jambo, who, as I afterwards heard that evening, made across to another native track which led him right into a German picket, who shot him. I was more lucky, and that day made a big round through the bush, picking up in the afternoon two more natives. Under their guidance I hoped to reach a village that night which they said so far neither Germans nor English had visited. However, these two fellows apparently knew all about us, and had their orders from the Germans.

* *Posho*—ration allowance.

It was very tiring, and the wound had become very sore during the afternoon, and I was tempted, foolishly indeed, to follow once more those natives along a small and unused native track. The relief from walking through the long grass was too great a temptation to be resisted.

CHAPTER V

A PRISONER

ABOUT five o'clock I found I had been led, quite unsuspectingly, into a party of the enemy waiting for me in ambush right on the track. I only remember yells of "Hands up!" and two men in particular pressing their rifles into my ribs. Too flabbergasted to do anything, I stared at them in a hopeless and stupid sort of manner, while they continued pressing their rifles up against me. It never went into my head, so surprised was I, to drop the rifle which was slung over my right shoulder.

Presently it dawned on me that the two men, whom alone I seemed really to notice, were not Germans at all, but evidently Dutchmen. "Good God!" I said, "you don't want to shoot your own men, do you? I am not a German."

At this they started laughing, and one of them asked me, speaking in English, "Don't you think we are Germans then?"

"Of course you are not," I said; "you are Dutch. What are you, Brits' men or who?"

This seemed to tickle them more than ever, and then a big man on my right spoke to me, calling

my attention to the round German rosette, or whatever it is, on his big felt hat. I realised right enough then that the two men on my right, though Dutch, were enemies ; they were two of the Dutch settlers of Arusha. In all there were ten German whites in the party that surrounded me, including a doctor. They were quite decent, and several of them complimented me on our trip. (" Sie haben eine shone Patrouille gemacht ") " You have made a fine patrol, but you made a mistake in attacking our convoy. That was your downfall," they said. They had a snack of brown bread and dripping and cold sausage in which I shared, without being pressed, and we then set out for the main German camp. The place where I was captured was apparently about midway between our camp and the German. " Don't try and run away," said one of the Dutchmen.

The German main camp, the headquarters of Von Lettow himself, was a very big affair. Fires stretched as far as the eye could see, and much noise and singing by enormous numbers of porters greeted the ear. I was taken to the doctor, and had the wound in the hip dressed ; there was no sign of gangrene or anything. " Sie haben gluck gehabt," said the German doctor ; a fraction nearer would have smashed the hip-bone. Then to tea with the two Dutchmen, an odd German being present on and off during the meal also. Surely I had a great feed ! Fresh meat, rice, sweet potatoes, and coffee.

During this Von Lettow himself came across. The two Dutchmen jumped up and spoke to him, and then he had me called over. I heard Van R. say to the German General before he called me up, "We have got Wienholt"; the General's reply, "Das ist famos, das ist famos, das Kommt nicht wieder," meaning presumably the raiding of his convoys. Von Lettow spoke to me—in German, of course—for a few minutes, asking me what nationality I was. "I am an Australian, sir."

"But your name is German."

"Yes, the family is of German extraction, though not for the last three centuries."

"But the name is German."

"Yes, certainly, sir; originally, I believe, from near Bremen."

Again he asked me, "Have you had fever?"

"No, sir, I have no fever."

"Oh, it is wounded then that you are?"

"Yes, just slightly."

"Ah," said he, "we have known all about you." Then he asked me if I was the leader of the scouts, and I told him I was the oldest.

The German General impressed me favourably. Roughly dressed, wearing slacks, heavy ammunition boots, and a coat not unlike a British warm; his manner not at all overbearing; his face the face of a strong man. He called some young officer over to him and led him off by the arm, evidently giving some instructions.

A bad night is a man's first night as a prisoner,

resembling the new boy's first night at a big, strange school. It is then in the quiet that the iron enters one's soul. Next morning, however, we were off down to the central line with two companies then being sent, I gathered, to help in the Muansa district, at that time hard pressed by the Belgians. Just as we left camp one of our aeroplanes came over, dropping small bombs. The askaris made me step off the road with them, but otherwise took little notice, and continued to roll their cigarettes: so much for the yarns of the native terror of our "*indegi*" (bird).

On the fourth day we reached the German Central Railway at Kimomba, and the two German N.C.O.'s in whose charge I had been travelling, and who had treated me civilly and well, handed me over at the railway station. Whilst waiting in the station building, two petty officers of the *Königsberg*, doing railway duty, entertained me with the German view of things: "In four months in Europe it is all over." "France is finished." "This I must say, the Englishman is no soldier." It is vain to argue with the Master of Forty Legions, and my only retort was to ask innocently for the latest news about Verdun, and if it had yet been taken.

That evening we went by train to Morogoro, where quite a little crowd of Germans had collected to see the captured bush-ranger. It is only fair to mention that from Von Lettow downwards no

one ever appeared to have any idea of attempting to ask for information. The prisoner slept that night in a little detached room close to the railway station, perhaps formerly a lamp and oil store. In the night came further excitement, for several boxes of old ammunition stored in my room were remembered, and these had to be taken outside lest, I suppose, the desperate character within should attempt to blow his way out of prison.

The journey was resumed next day, and we arrived at Dar-es-Salaam about 9 p.m., to find the inhabitants of that town, in true colonial custom, assembled to meet the train. My destiny was the gaol, where the warder, who, not really a bad sort, welcomed me with the following information: "Frankreich is caput" (France is done for), "England hat kein geld mehr" (England has no more money), "und Russland ist auch caput" (Russia is also done for).

Early next morning we were marched down the coast, in charge of another stout little German and seven askaris. My guardian, in private life the skipper of a small coasting boat, was again a good sort. He told me as a great joke that an English hydroplane from our warships had lately flown over Dar-es-Salaam dropping bombs, but the only casualties were four Goanese tailors—"your own subjects," said he, with a chuckle. As a prisoner, I now believe firmly in having *fat* men as guardians.

We reached the Rufigit river after some days, crossing it not far from Mohoro. Though it is a fine stream, flowing strongly and fully 400 yards across, I felt no great enthusiasm for it, realising that it was another considerable obstacle between me and our columns. "Here will come the big fight," says my German guardian, and later on he tells me in confidence, "Here the English will have the bush war." That night we camped near the river bank at the German post, and the German in charge informed us that there were two bad man-eaters about, and that he had lost several porters lately from these lions.

As a prisoner I take accordingly an unusual interest in the strength of the walls of the little outside hut I am put into for the night, and console myself with the thought that should anything happen during the night, the askaris on guard will doubtless be taken first.

Kilwa was our next stop, and in the meanwhile I had been transferred to the charge of a wretched little creature of a German N.C.O., who I noticed, with misgiving, was *very thin*. His heart was bad, and so he rode the whole of the next twelve days to Liwale in a *machela* (hammock or chair fixed on poles and carried by natives). To me it seemed a long twelve days' walk, for on the journey I began to get weak with fever and dysentery. Liwale, formerly an ordinary police station, was then used as a prison for English

officers, of whom about fifteen were there, in company with two Portuguese and two Belgian officers. I, as the only English non-officer prisoner in the place, was kept in a cell in the actual boma building, outside of which was a barbed-wire fence. The English officers were not allowed to speak to me, but I found I had fellow-prisoners in the shape of two Portuguese infantrymen. They, however, were not so strictly guarded as I was, for they were allowed to go outside the boma, and to speak to their officers. I tried hard to persuade my companions to teach me their language, but they were evidently not inclined to do this. Through the freedom allowed to the Portuguese, I managed to answer, of course, in secret, a series of questions from the British officers, who, naturally, were hungry for news :

1. Is it true Kitchener is dead ?
2. Which ships did each side lose in the Jutland fight ?
3. Has the Canal been taken by the Turks ?
4. Where are our troops now in G.E.A. ?
5. How long do you think it may be before we are relieved ?

A young *Königsberg* sailor was in charge of our food and domestic arrangements : quite a nice lad, who was anxious to learn English, and looked forward to going to Australia "when the war was over." But instead of going to Australia, he died later of blackwater. Our food was at first both good and plentiful, but I own I hardly

found my two companions congenial. It was hard to kill time in those days. Then in November some fifteen batches of South Africans, captured near Kissaki, were brought in, special bandas having been built for them outside the boma, and I was lodged with them. At once the chance of escape became practical.

All this time the wound in my hip, though very slight, had kept running and would not heal. It was getting sore, and needed attention. An old German doctor, Herr Anning, formerly, I believe, a member of the Reichstag, now came to the post, and he, most courteous of men to us prisoners—officers and men alike—cured and healed the wound for me. Just before the South African prisoners came in, a *safari* of twenty chained porters, carrying loads of English potatoes, left the boma in the direction of Kilwa. Five days later they returned with their loads intact. Also, about this time, I seemed to notice something of a change in the attitude of the German askaris. “Did you get a sniff of anything to-day?” said the big German—a very decent fellow, in private life manager of the Liwale Rubber Plantation—who took us out walking every afternoon. The fact was that our troops had recently landed at Kilwa and Lindi.

The next thing was a general move of the whole of the prisoners’ camp right back to the Luwego river, a fourteen days’ trip, where a camp was formed in the bush close to the river at a place

called Mangangira. New buildings were quickly erected and the camp routine established. Food had now become very scarce, and henceforward the prisoners were badly and insufficiently fed; often we were really very hungry. For breakfast all we had was a plate of matama porridge; lunch was a plate of rice and a small ladleful of beans; for tea, a plate of matama again and some rice. When any of the Germans shot a buck or, better still, a pig, we had meat in addition to the above rations, and that day fared well: otherwise we went to bed hungry. At the same time, continual attacks of dysentery brought me very low. Heavy storms, too, fell nearly every evening, for we were now in December.

Against these discomforts was the knowledge that the chance of escape had become much more hopeful. We were in a wild spot, and the Germans were getting careless.

At Liwale I had shown my companions how to preserve their meat by making "biltong" and "salt junk." I liked doing this, as I generally took the opportunity to cut off and fry two big steaks on some coals, one (need I say?) being for the askari guard. I had also volunteered for this job because it let me out through the barbed wire of the boma, and I hoped it might offer an opportunity for escape. However, at that time I was too well guarded.

The prisoners' greatest luxury in the matter of food came on "Rissolle Day," when fresh meat

had been killed. For then our native cooks, chopping up the meat fine, each with two big sharp knives, played a rat-a-tat-tat on the meat-board, the pleasantest of music to hungry men. Great were our expectations when the "song of the rissole" arose from the kitchen. "Fatty," as we named the stout German who mostly shot for the camp, made himself unpopular, because, as we hungry men declared, he would only shoot pigs to the neglect of all other game, such was his love for pork. Some of this pork, too, he used to smoke in an ingenious smoke-box, though, needless to say, *we* never tasted these home-made delicacies.

For Christmas Day the prisoners had been told they would each receive two pieces of lump sugar as a treat ; but on that particular morning, when we woke up, something started us singing "God Save the King," and thereupon the furious commandant, Oberleutenant Papke, rushed out of his neighbouring banda ordering us to stop that noise, and further punishing us by cancelling the issue of sugar. Not that anyone really cared, and between Papke and most of us there was never any love lost.

One of our German guards, known as the "Bosun," was really a great character. Originally one of the *Königsberg's* crew, a gruff old sailor with a big red beard, he was rather terrifying until one got to know him a little. To be able to speak German was, of course, a tremendous ad-

vantage in many ways to a prisoner, especially with a man like old "Bosun" in the camp.

One fine day there was great excitement, for an order had come that one of us was to go over to the "Bosun" to draw elephant fat. As a speaker of German, I, as usual, went over, to find the old "Bosun" in great good humour; some friends must have sent him a bottle of schnapps. A great bucket of beautiful white elephant fat and a dipper were by his side.

"Good morning, Herr Bosun, how is the fever this morning?"

"Oh, still bad," and a dipperful of fat goes into my basin.

"You suffer a lot, we notice, Herr Bosun."

"Yes, it is a dreadful country"—a second dipperful of fat.

"I often wonder, Herr Bosun, how you manage to stick it out as you do"—another dipperful. "Anyone else would have had to be carried on the last *safari*; you must have great pluck and a wonderful constitution"—yet another dipperful. At last, in shame, I start to withdraw the now nearly full basin, but, "Wait, wait," says the old chap, "just one more for *backshishi*."

On my return the booty is shared out before fifteen hungry and watchful pairs of eyes, and it amounts to just a condensed milk-tin full for each man. Mine lasted four days, and I felt much the stronger for it; in fact it just made all the

difference, for one had begun to crave for fat, sugar, and anything in the way of vegetables.

As to vegetables, there had been a bitter disappointment some time previously, after Zimmermann, the *Königsberg* baker, and now our quartermaster, kindled vast hopes with the news, "To-day you will get cabbages from the cabbage palm ; yes, and it is much better than common cabbage, and very hard even to tell the difference." He also said that in peace times this alleged succulent luxury was protected by a heavy fine, since to get the cabbage the tree must be killed. We had that vegetable for lunch ; but Papke must have eaten the cabbage part, and all that we seemed to have got was some of the trunk ten feet lower. Alas ! the hungriest could not eat it. For my own part, I prefer bottle tree, and I consider that heavy fine unnecessary.

In January our hunger was still keener, and it seemed a painfully long time between meals. Game was decidedly scarce anywhere near the camp, and meat was not so frequently obtained. The officers who were on parole were trying to increase their supplies by snaring partridges, but I, being in the ranks, was always guarded day and night. In those hungry days philosophy taught one that, after all, the nicest things are really the commonest and simplest. When "hungry" talk started in the banda, as it did each evening, it was noticeable, when anybody was choosing the food he would have if he were free, how he in-

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variably chose something plain, like roast beef and potatoes, a good fresh herring, or, again, a fresh loaf of bread and some butter. My choice was always a big bowl of brown bread and milk with plenty of sugar.

CHAPTER VI

MY ESCAPE

WITH my health somewhat restored by the elephant fat, I decided the time ripe for a dash for liberty. It was now or never. One of my fellow-prisoners, a South African wireless operator and quite a boy, knew weeks before that I was going to try and escape if chance offered, and had said that he wished to go with me. He was now told "to-night's the night," and was also informed of my plans. We needed to take a little rice and matama flour with us in order to avoid, as far as possible for the first three or four days, all intercourse with native villages. We had to ask B., another South African prisoner, for this food, because he had charge of all our rations, then still drawn ahead from the Germans for about five days. The Germans, to save themselves trouble, had made us draw our rations in one lot for a couple of weeks ahead, and this, as it happened, proved rather an unwise proceeding. B., when asked for the food, of course, wanted to come with us, and he also had a mate, M., who wished to be included. So in the end we agreed

to take these two with us, thus making a party of four in all.

As an old bushman, and the only one speaking Swahili at all, I was to be the sole boss.

At nine in the evening we were to try and sneak out one by one to meet, if all went well, at a certain big tree a few hundred yards away. There was but little to be done in the way of preparations, for our worldly goods were not numerous; each took a small grain sack, with a little flour, rice or salt, a spoon, a sort of blanket, and one a knife and a couple of small tins for cooking purposes. I also had a compass, secretly obtained from Lieutenant Sankey of the *Goliath*, who, being in the plot, had provided us, in addition, with a box of matches.

At 8 p.m. I went quickly round to every man in the banda—all the prisoners as usual were at that time lying on their stick and grass beds—and told each man it was best for him to see nothing, say nothing, and do nothing. This was the first intimation that anything was going to happen, and there was no discussion.

About half-past eight a great thunderstorm came up, and we noticed with some pleasure that the askari known to us as "Smiler," whom we hated worst of all the guards, had come on duty. In a few minutes a dreadful storm of rain, with great flashes of vivid lightning, broke over the camp. The askaris had an open guard banda alongside ours, in which the corporal and other

askaris stayed every night, a huge fire being built between us.

As the storm broke, our friend "Smiler" hurried across to get into the guard shed. Everything outside the fire had become pitch black except when broken by the gleams of lightning. Now was our chance. Rapidly following each other, we slipped through the side of our banda whilst "Smiler" was round the other side, and soon had joined up a little way off in the dark.

After following a little track for some time, and keeping touch in the blackness and rain only by holding a hand on the leading man's shoulder, it was evident we could not get far by night in that weather. It was a very big storm, and though uncomfortable to be out in, a very good friend to us. My companions were shown that to travel in that storm and in the dark would only leave us completely done up by morning, with but a few miles between us and our late prison. Therefore, after marching for not more than an hour, we camped quietly for the rest of the night, the rain completely washing out all signs of our tracks between the prison camp and where we slept. At the earliest sign of dawn we set out in dead earnest, steering a little north of east to hit the coast, as I hoped, somewhere north of Kilwa. I counted on leaving to our right the main body of the Germans opposed to our Kilwa column.

The country was just a big sea of level bush, with but little really thick thorn bush. We went

fast, and though not very strong (our feet got very sore and badly cut), we travelled like madmen ; for we were free, and terribly afraid of being recaptured. The fourth day we struck a party of *Shensis* (raw natives) in some quiet bush. They looked well disposed, so, putting on a bold face, we had a long talk with them. Of course they knew what we were ; for it is not the custom for white men to travel unarmed and without servants—to say nothing of our generally disreputable, runaway appearance. They were promised good *backshishi* to take us through to the English, and warned that if they told the Germans and got us recaptured, they would themselves have to answer for it eventually to the British. As they knew that the English were slowly eating up the Germans throughout the whole country, the natives decided, after a long talk, to accompany us as guides.

At once we were off. It was most necessary to get away before they had time to change their minds. Our hopes of getting through were now high, for our guides were scared and taking no risks, which facts made it all the safer for us.

The enemy were scattered more or less all through the country we travelled, and occasionally we heard them shooting ; but I felt sure our guides were thoroughly to be trusted. We were very careful ; always camping at night in the thickest scrub we could find, and, when food had to be cooked, never stopping a minute longer

than was necessary at a fire. Our guides, too, only entered a village when they knew that particular friends or relatives resided in it.

Hungry times we had, often living on wild fruit, though once indeed we managed to get a whole chicken. The rain made it rough travelling; continual heavy storms all night and almost every night, for the wet season had now set in, and we were utterly without shelter. Still it was always a warm rain, and, above all, we were once more at large and free.

On the fifteenth day after leaving Mangangira we reached a little advanced post of our K.A.R. at Nambangi, where an askari corporal was in charge. There we stayed a day, eating up, I fear, between us all his, and his men's, fat ration—about half a kerosene-tin full. Thence, through pouring rain and flooded creeks, we came to Chemera, the advanced post of our Kilwa force. I need not say we were well received, the more so that one of our Intelligence Officers, Lieutenant Gattwood, was there. He looked after us with paternal care, while all the promised *backshishi* was duly given to our guides. It was grand to get some news again, though I was terribly sorry to hear that Frederick Selous had been killed.

After waiting a day at Chemera, orders came for me to report to my chief at the Headquarters of the first division. In the camp General O'Grady came up and shook hands, and it was good to find him alive and well. We all, even then, thought

him a great soldier, though he was still to make, in the Lindi area later on, that splendid reputation (amongst the men at the front at any rate) which endeared him to all who served under him. Brave as a lion personally, he was, above all other general officers on our side, a man, who, like the German leader himself, would appeal as a personality to negro troops. It was a great misfortune that he went back to India when the Germans later on broke south across the Roouma, and so was not available in the field for the campaign in Portuguese country that followed.

The general situation in G.E.A. had not, after all, changed much during the six months that I had been a prisoner. We had, it is true, taken and occupied the Central Railway and the enemy's capital, Dar-es-Salaam, and had landed at Kilwa and Lindi and occupied the country south as far as the Rufigi river; but the German Army, though much reduced in numbers, was still in the field and undefeated, with the *moral* of both whites and blacks probably higher than ever, and with a great stretch of country most suitable for a defensive and bush warfare still in enemy hands. Again the big South African Expeditionary Force, including its leader, had melted like butter in the sun, and another tombstone had appeared in that African graveyard of military reputations.

There was indeed one Boer General in the south well able, both by natural military skill and by experience, to command in this most awkward of

campaigns, and in whom the troops, I believe, would have had great confidence. Unfortunately, his heavy responsibilities as Premier of South Africa in those troubled times made this impossible. As it was, it was a poor consolation to those left in the field to read that our late Commander-in-Chief had been acclaimed as the conqueror of German East, and to read, in the papers we received, that the German forces were now nothing but scattered fugitives amongst their fever swamps and jungles. Later on, just about the time of the fight at Narungombe (when we had more casualties than at Colenso), I remember being distinctly annoyed by a letter from a friend, who asked me why I stayed on in East Africa, on a "black veld police patrolling job," now that the campaign was finished there.

Whilst I had been in durance vile, the excellent Nigerian and Gold Coast battalions had arrived on the scene, soon to prove themselves some of the best black troops we had in the whole campaign. I found that General Hoskins, our old chief of the first division, had now become Commander-in-Chief, and on taking over he must have had a very unthankful and heart-breaking task with all the straightening up and reorganising of the British forces that was required. He had quite lately driven Von Lettow's main force from its positions around Kibata in perhaps the severest engagements of the whole campaign. Just before we escaped we had heard the guns at Kibata, at

the Luwago prison camp, plainly enough, though the firing must have been well over 100 miles away.

When I had reported to my chief, I journeyed down to Kilwa, where I saw General Hoskins himself ; and soon after this the dysentery, from which I had suffered more or less all the time of my captivity, took a bad turn, and this meant going into hospital. To pull through this attack proved a hard fight, and indeed recovery could not have taken place without the unceasing care of the hospital staff generally, and the special orderly who looked after me in particular. It is impossible to speak too highly of the care and attention that brought me round, and, for my own part, I rank the pukka R.A.M.C. man very high in the Army list.

From Kilwa I was moved to Lady Colville's Convalescent Hospital in Nairobi, a place so nicely run that a few weeks seemed to work miracles in us patients. It was there we heard the bad news that General Hoskins was leaving, and I was not the only one who felt depressed about it ; I am convinced that there would have been no campaign in 1918 in Portuguese East Africa had he remained in charge. The General came to say good-bye to us at the hospital.

I was nearly fit again when I paid a short visit, on convalescent leave, to my old school friend, Cole, who had a property at Gilgil, where he was running about 13,000 sheep, managing the place

as far as possible on Australian lines. The sheep—quite fair-looking Merinos, cutting a good fleece—had been bred up from native stock with Australian imported rams. The herd of cattle, too, had also been bred up from native cows and imported bulls, the first cross showing really extraordinary improvements. My friend's fat wethers were fetching nineteen shillings off shears at that time, and the fat bullocks, quite decent-looking beasts, going not far short of 700 lb., £7 10s. The owner, however, was not without his troubles, for he had to contend against a good deal of disease amongst his flock, besides the worry of big herds of zebra eating his grass and drinking at his troughs—a proof that the country was still in its pioneering stage. He also had to endure raids on his stock by predatory beasts, some of them humans. My friend showed me his yearly accounts, and it was amusing to notice such an item as £3 bonus for trapping a lion, and the considerable expenditure for umbrellas for his Masai herdsmen—who dislike their coiffures getting wet. On my telling Cole one morning that it was a good plan to cut the tips of bulls' horns to prevent them seriously injuring one another, he mentioned that the Masai themselves acted on rather a different plan; they *sharpened* the horns of a favourite bull to enable him to assert his superiority against his rivals for the favour of the females, and by this means get a bigger percentage of the calves.

It was a jolly and a recuperative holiday, mentally no less than physically, for my friend was a charming host, and it gave me the chance to see more of that rich and delightful country, British East Africa.

CHAPTER VII

BACK TO DUTY

FULLY recovered, I returned to the front via Dar-es-Salaam, which I now viewed under happier circumstances. The beautiful little natural harbour is rather small, and apparently the narrow entrance has its drawbacks.

From Dar-es-Salaam I went to report to my chief, the C.I.O., who was with the column at Matandawala. There I found my old comrade, "Buster" Brown, and had a lunch with him that was remarkable for one of his cook's masterpieces, a blanc-mange pudding flavoured with chopped onion.

My first duty, after getting six or seven I.D. askaris and half a dozen porters, was to go north and learn if there appeared any likelihood of a German force working around from the north-west to our lines of communication from Kilwa. My six porters were Kavirandos—very black and of the truest negro type. The Kroo boy is generally quoted as being the purest type of negro, but the Kavirando also appears to be a very pure species. They are fine porters—happy,

cheerful fellows—and I took a great liking to them, though really I prefer the Mnyamwezi. These particular six Kavirandos I had for many months, and the reason for their leaving me was that they poisoned themselves in true negro style, by eating some awful-looking red and yellow toadstools. None of them actually died, but at one time it looked as if they all would. I dosed them with charcoal, for I had nothing else, and I had once heard that it was a certain cure for a dog that had taken a bait. Only a week previous to their poisoning these Kavirandos were great black shiny creatures ; after their recovery they were so thin and wretched that I had to pack them off to the nearest hospital—and I almost cried at losing them.

On this first trip I found all the Nambangi district and the country north of it very dry, with water extremely scarce, and the land absolutely stripped of all food, whilst most of the natives had come to us from the Chemera district or farther inland for protection and food. Our farthest outpost was then at Namatiwa, where some eighty K.A.R.'s were stationed under two white officers, very youthful both, but good soldiers, experienced and careful. Pleasant hosts they were to the old bushman who stopped the night with them, and fared sumptuously on their " *Pie à la Namatiwa* " (bully beef, onions, and beans).

During this trip we twice saw lions, but of the enemy we saw nothing, though we heard them

shouting in the bush, and at the end of a fortnight we were back at Chemera. I reported that owing to the bare state of all that belt of country, it was most improbable that anything more than a very small raiding party of Germans could work round to do mischief.

Orders now came from my chief for a more definite piece of work—to discover and then destroy the enemy's little post and store at Mtundu, about forty-five miles north-west of Chemera. Two ruga-ruga (armed local natives) came to me as guides, and I was lucky to get them. The main guide, Abdulla, from a village called Mptora, was a grand figure, a young man of perhaps twenty-six years; a really nice fellow too, and a born gentleman, straight, tall, and lithe as a panther, but, as his yellowish colour indicated, not a pure negro. Of all the aboriginal peoples that I have come across, this man was the smartest and bravest of the lot, and never have I liked any native African so much. Thanks to Abdulla, who, of course, knew all the inhabitants around Mtundu (his own village Mptora being in the same district), we had an easy job. A copy of my telegram to my chief will be the best and shortest way to describe the work:

“ At Mptora found nothing; at Mtundu caught two German whites, one Feldvebel, one *Königsberg* deck officer, and one askari (Tanga company). Found little in magazine, some few bags each rice, beans, matama, and dried meat; some ammuni-

tion. Place also lately used as salt-making depot. After distributing surplus food among local natives, burnt whole post and returned with prisoners to Chemera."

That expedition accomplished, orders (sanctioned at Dar-es-Salaam) came from my chief that I should raise and arm a small force of ruga-ruga from the natives of the neighbouring districts, and enjoy a free hand generally for bush-ranging tactics against the enemy's posts, convoys, and "magazines" (stores) in the Mlembwe, Madaba, and Liwale districts. One of our white Intelligence Agents and twenty-five more I.D. Scouts were also sent up later to join me.

✓ This was the best part of the whole campaign to me. The Kanzus askaris (ruga-ruga) were capital fellows, working well under their own headmen, to whom I gave honorary rank of corporals and sergeants, and never giving the least trouble. Abdulla himself got hold of a single silver-coloured German lance-corporal's chevron, which he wore proudly as a badge denoting the rank of staff-sergeant-major; I always kept him with me. Bahkari, a very smart, well-mannered man, had the name of another ruga-ruga chief. There was also an old negro called Wazeri, a good sort and quite an old bush general. Many of these chaps before the war had been gun-bearers to white men out elephant shooting. Rifles and bandoliers, with a pair of shorts and a shirt each, completed the equipment of my force. The head-

dress was as each man fancied, and this gave scope for plenty of variety.

The German East campaign proved, at any rate, that, with training and discipline, the negro can become a first-rate soldier. In fact he really seems a born soldier, with his love of drill and parades, and my I.D. askaris have more than once asked me, when it has happened that we have been waiting a day or so in a big camp, "if they might drill to-morrow." Big children though they were, Von Lettow's askaris gave an example of bravery, discipline, and loyalty on a losing side rarely excelled. At the same time, it is doubtful whether it matters much to the negro under which white man he is enrolled; it is sufficient for him to be an askari.

There is a story, said to be quite true, of a K.A.R. soldier who, after apparently puzzling over the matter for some time, complained to his officer that he saw other askaris wearing a medal for a certain campaign and fight (of some years back), and asked why he had not got one also, as he, too, had been there. The officer made inquiries, with the result that the askari's tale was found to be true; he had been fighting right enough, but *against us*. Now we can understand how, under the world's supreme military genius, and for a personality only once equalled (the little Corsican), the black Numidian horsemen of Hannibal cut to pieces time and again the sturdy legions of Rome. The black soldier requires

above all that his actual leader shall be a man to look up to, and in this German East campaign the enemy's General was such a man.

The first trip after recruiting the ruga-ruga was in a way unlucky, for while passing in the bush by a little village called Marosho, we got news that a patrol of German askaris had just caught two of my unarmed natives, previously sent out as spies. With our other work on hand at the time I should have preferred leaving this little post of the enemy's, but it was, of course, necessary to try and effect my men's release. So, from the long grass around, we rushed the few huts of the enemy, and all save one German askari bolted. This man, a huge, savage-looking *onbasha* (corporal), promptly shot and killed the guide by my side, and with a second shot chipped some wood off Bakari's rifle; thereupon he was shot dead by Abdulla and others. I took a lion's claw charm from his neck, and, whatever its potency against lions may have been, the charm had not been proof against an enemy's bullets. It had brought him at least a brave man's death.

We hurried on that evening, but next day were mixed up again with another little German patrol. On our attacking, the enemy's askaris bolted in time, but the white man, though I told him to drop his rifle, started firing at us, and so my men had to shoot him. Knowing that now all other enemy posts around would have had warning, and having had my new levies out on their first

trip, we made back to our main camp in the bush near Mponda creek. My white subordinate (I had been given an officer's commission after getting away from the Germans) now came up to join me, and it was a pleasant change to have a white man with me, though we were not very often together.

From that time onwards I was engaged on short trips similar to those described. Another small column, under Lieutenant Thornton (a very able I.D. officer), was working north of us not many days away, and as they were working down towards Madaba and Mlembwe, we went across and cut that road in the bush above Mlembwe, picking up a few prisoners. All the natives were very friendly, and in each village there were sure to be relatives of the ruga-ruga with me. At one village I noticed particularly a man with two frightful old scars on his head; it was horrible to look at them; the skull seemed to have been, at some time, cut open in two places with a chopper. He told me that a leopard had seized him when a child.

In those days the local inhabitants always gave us splendid information of the German's movements, and I think but very little of our movements were made known to the enemy. We were entirely dependent on the local people for information, and it makes all the difference to an Intelligence man when he has the native residents whole-heartedly on his side.

About this time a small party of Germans, three whites and some askaris, with a picked party of porters, carrying picks and shovels, tried to work back towards the Rufigi to get some buried ammunition ; but all their movements were made known to us by the natives, and after Thornton's men had ambushed and scattered the party in his district, we caught them all as they drifted back in twos and threes, with the exception of one white who was taken by Thornton. Our success in this case was entirely due to the information supplied from native sources.

Later on we paid a trip to a German post at a place called Ku-ku, where on our departure, after taking a couple of small enemy convoys of native food, and catching a white man and a few askaris, we, as usual, burnt the post. From the way they helped us, it was obvious that the local natives were of opinion that the day of the German was nearly over. One of our guides at this time was a most interesting-looking nigger, whom we called the "Gorilla Man." He was a very big negro, with unusually prominent teeth and sloping forehead, yet a remarkably intelligent fellow.

Once more the rainy season approached, and the beautifully clear moonlit nights were almost too bright for sleep. All this time we had been working farther west and getting closer to my old prison at Liwala, and at Mlembwa we were lucky enough to make prisoners of twenty-six German

whites. On sending them away, I allowed each prisoner to keep one box for his best clothes and belongings, but all their old clothes, spare blankets, cooking-pots, cutlery, etc., were legitimate booty for my askaris, as, in any case, there were not sufficient porters to be sent with the prisoners. This small but well-deserved loot was only the just due of my faithful though ragged ruga-ruga.

By November the sands of time left for German rule in the East African Colony were running low. The Belgian troops—good askaris they are too—from the north-west, and General Northey's columns from the south-west, had now cleared the whole of their great areas and were about to join with the main coastal columns. Von Lettow, fighting with consummate skill and frequently holding up our forces in heavy engagements, had been gradually pushed farther and farther back by our troops, and with his companies greatly reduced by losses, had come to realise that to delay any longer meant being caught between our coastal and "Norforce" columns. Accordingly he broke quickly south, crossing the Rovuma at Ngomano into Portuguese territory. Colonel Tafel, with a somewhat smaller force, coming down from the Luwegu, was less fortunate, for, delaying too long, he was caught, short of ammunition and supplies, in a completely starved-out district, and had to surrender with about 100 whites and 1,200 askaris.

This was by far the best single success that

we had throughout the whole campaign, and it was particularly pleasing to learn that the I.D. had behaved well in the actual capture. One of our officers, Lieutenant McGregor, with a force of about sixty I.D. askaris and ruga-ruga, had been attacked in an isolated position by superior numbers, by a part of Tafel's force that was attempting to break south. This attack took place early in the morning, and McGregor put up a fine defence, but was unfortunately killed about midday; whereupon, there being no other white man with the party, the old black Sergeant-Major Commando (a Mnyanwezi) took charge, and towards evening had completely beaten off the enemy. The retreat of Von Lettow's force into Portuguese territory was again the subject for further and very premature congratulations in high quarters, and once more the conquest of German East was hailed in the papers.

The sale of the bear's skin had twice been concluded, though the animal himself, in the shape of Von Lettow and his little army of picked men, was very much alive, and marching south to some purpose. In his last message to the Kaiser, the late Governor of German South-West had mentioned, in advising his imperial master of the surrender of that colony, that owing to the condition of their animals and the dryness of the country, it had not been possible for their troops finally to break north into Angola (Portuguese West Africa) as originally intended. But, as we

have seen, there was some attempt by a few die-hards to carry out this plan of campaign, and work across Rhodesia for the purpose of uniting with the German East forces.

As for the campaign in the Cameroons, it had ended with the German forces, as a last resource, crossing into Spanish territory, preferring internment to capture.

There was never any doubt in most of our minds as to what Von Lettow's last move would and must be ; yet in spite of all this, and in spite of the example and fate of the Portuguese force at Newala a year before, a large Portuguese force with great supplies of arms and ammunition, but totally unsupported by any British troops, was allowed to collect at Ngomano at the junction of the Rovuma and Lugenda rivers. The German leader, as at Newala, left the rich prize to ripen till the very last moment, and then, crossing the Rovuma, scattered the Portuguese with one sharp attack. The serious part of all this was the great number of maxims and rifles and the amount of ammunition that fell into his hands. Destroying their German weapons (for which ammunition had by that time run perilously low), the whole force was rearmed with new Portuguese .256 Mausers, with ammunition more than sufficient.

Thus rearmed, and with every available porter and local Shensi loaded with boxes of their new ammunition, the enemy moved leisurely south

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along the Lugenda river, a big tributary of the Rovuma, rising near Nyassa. The great raid on Portuguese East, or, as the Germans called it, the "Opera " War, against our Allies had begun.

My ruga-ruga had now unfortunately to be disbanded, and sent, less rifles and equipment, to their homes. I hated parting with Abdulla and the others, and afterwards missed them very considerably. They were willing to come on with me, they said, if I wanted them, but orders were to dismiss them, and perhaps they would hardly have been so useful in a strange district, amongst people whose language even was quite different from theirs, as they had been in their own areas.

CHAPTER VIII

HARD TIMES

FOLLOWING our latest instructions, Henocksberg and I, with about forty I.D. askaris, then went south, crossing the Rovuma at Ngomano. The water was at its lowest, and the big river, still some 1,200 yards across, and flowing majestically, was fordable chest high, and extraordinarily warm. It was delightful wading across, especially as for the last six months we had been in country mostly watered by sand-pits. It must have been owing to that crossing that I retain such a pleasant impression of "that great river, the river Rovuma."

Leaving the Lugenda to the west, we went straight on through what must be in the dry season an uninhabited and waterless belt. The first early thunderstorms having brought water here and there, we suffered no privation, but there was neither road nor track, and for some days we were continually in bamboo country. Now, to march through such country is particularly tedious and irritating, and I got to detest these bamboo forests in P.E.A., with a sort of personal hatred for the detestably noisy stuff.

Christmas we spent in the bamboo, and, after

crossing the Muiriti river, twelve days from the Rovuma found us at the Portuguese boma of Coronge on the Msalu river. The place, only lately abandoned by its owners, was in good order, as was also another smaller and abandoned post at Nicoque farther south.

The German force, after following the Lugenda southwards, had scattered a good deal, some of the companies going west towards Nyassa, and other small raiding parties reaching to the coast. It was only the arrival by ship of the Gold Coast contingent, under Colonel Rose, at Pemba (Port Amelia) that had prevented the enemy entering and taking that port. The main enemy forces with Von Lettow occupied a stretch of country between Mweri (Medo) and Mahua, in the very centre of northern P.E.A., and to dislodge them our communications would have to be lengthy and difficult.

Our own little party, reduced by sickness and desertions to twenty-seven, had formed a camp amongst a little rocky outcrop in the bush, about five hours north of Mweri—where two companies of the enemy, under Hauptman Kohl, one of Von Lettow's best officers, were then stationed. With the heavy rains now beginning to fall almost daily, it was necessary for us to build some sort of shelter.

The Germans had found that food of every kind, except meat, was most plentiful; fowls, also fruit, rice, and other indigenous crops, were

in abundance. The inhabitants, too, had everywhere welcomed them with enthusiasm, for the Portuguese rule was not of a character to command either the respect or the liking of its subjects. The Germans were hailed by the poor Shensis as being nothing less than heaven-sent deliverers from their cruel and cowardly oppressors. The Germans, of course, seized, looted, and burned every one of the Portuguese bomas they came across, the little garrisons invariably bolting on the approach of even the smallest party of the enemy. Every burned boma was to the native population a little Bastille going up in flames. We English, as the friends of the Portuguese, naturally found the inhabitants against us, and, generally speaking, throughout the P.E.A. campaign we Intelligence men never got the slightest voluntary help or information from any native. On the other hand, the Germans were advised immediately of any of our movements, and could always obtain guides, porters, etc., from the Shensis whenever needed. An enemy askari whom we captured told me, "Night and day the Shensis are coming into us with news." I knew that frequently our notes to and from the columns were taken into the German camps. The contrast with German East, where we were amongst friendly people, was most striking to us Intelligence men; but I was myself stupidly slow to realise it sufficiently, and before long I had to pay severely for this mistake.

It was indeed a Promised Land into which the war-weary and ragged German askaris had been led; plenty of food ("We are tired of chickens," said one captured askari to me), loot from the Indian stores and Portuguese bomas, with women in abundance. "Never," said a captured German's diary of this period, "have we fared so well during the last four years."

The enemy soon got to hear that we were in their neighbourhood, especially as we were getting in the Government tax food from the various villages, to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands. However, we had our own troubles close at hand, for a few days after making our temporary camp and erecting shelters, a leopard, coming into the camp at night (we had, of course, no fires), seized and terribly mauled my white companion. The horrible beast, sneaking in, had seized his victim by the head, and, dragging him off his stretcher, had actually taken him away some fifteen yards before we were able to help him. Being asleep at the time, I was rather muddled for a few seconds when his shrieks started, and I fear was all too slow in coming to his assistance. It was not till he had cried out "*chui*" (leopard) that the situation was made plain to me, and meanwhile the man-eater was worrying him.

Calling out to Henocksberg so as to get his position (it was drizzling and pitch dark), I fired to the left of his voice, and thereupon the beast left him and made off. The poor fellow was very

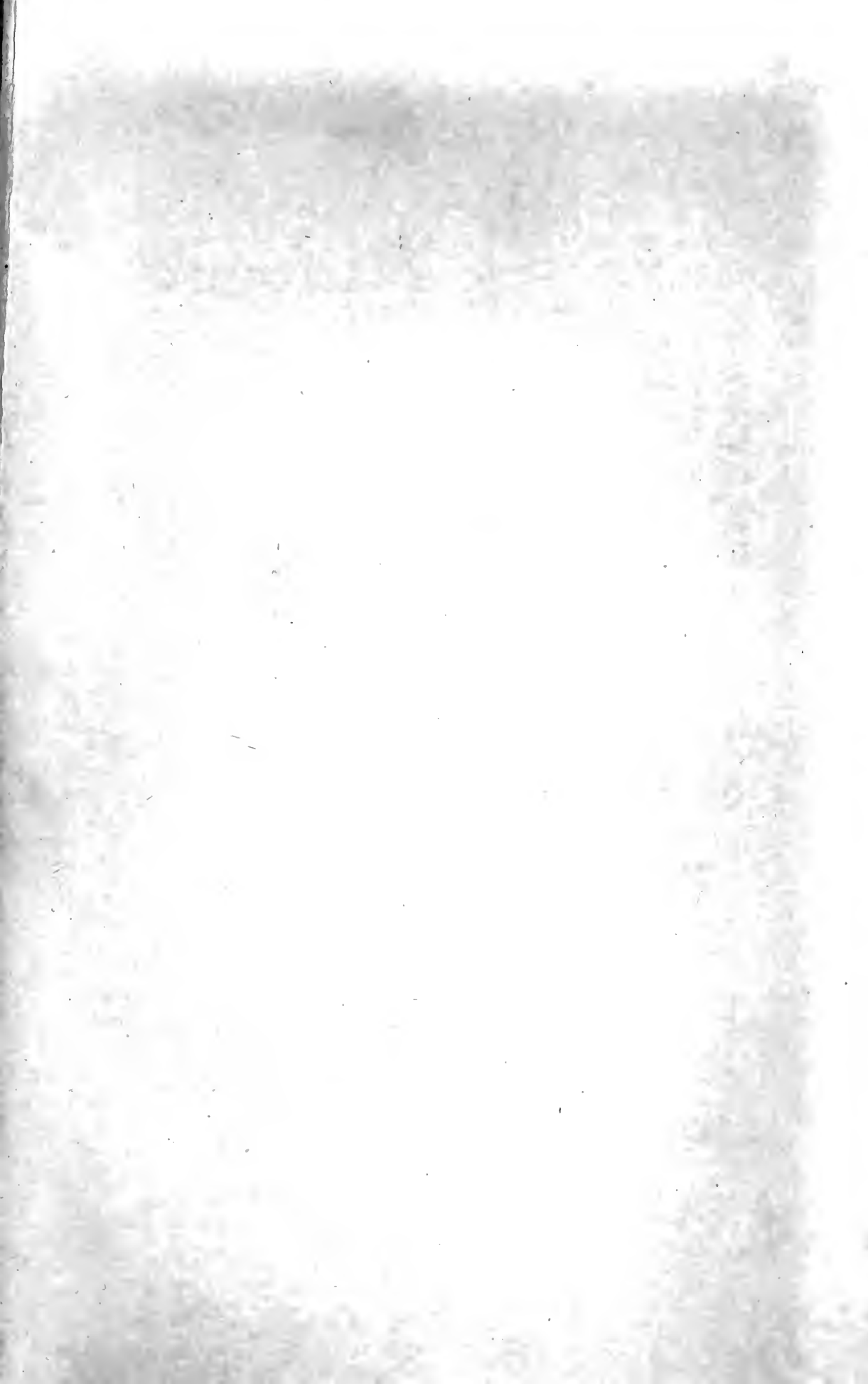
badly bitten about the head, the worst bites being directly around the throat and eyes. By the light of a fire, which the men hurried to make, I bathed the injuries as quickly as possible, washing the whole head, arms, and shoulders with permanganate, for the wounds were far too numerous to be dressed individually. Making doubly sure no small scratches had been missed, we made him as comfortable as possible, myself and several askaris lying close at hand by the side of one of the many fires we had kindled.

Hardly had we finished attending to Henocksberg, than shrieks and shots from the lower part of the camp told us that the leopard had again attacked. This time he caught an askari, one of the picket, a Kafirondo named "James," seizing him, as before, by the head, despite the fact that the man was in his blankets right alongside the sentry. The leopard was, however, on this occasion immediately driven off his prey, and James, not nearly so badly hurt as poor Henocksberg, escaped with a few nasty bites on the head and one above the eye. As I dressed his wound, the difference between the head of our brother Ethiopian and the head of a white man was made very plain, and the amused, sheepish smile on James's round, good-natured face made me realise why the negro fighter has always held his own in the prize ring from the days of Richmond to those of Johnson and Langford.

The attendance on James being completed, I

really did hope our troubles for the night were over—but not a bit of it. Within half an hour another series of yells and howls from the porters' camp hard by revealed that the spotted devil had returned to the charge. After the askaris had driven off again our too persistent visitor, this time with shots sufficient to represent creditably a small battle, they brought along a sorry-looking spectacle in the shape of my *neapara* (head porter), who had been snatched from his blankets and dragged off several yards. He, too, was badly bitten about the head and around the eyes. All this must surely have been most trying for poor H., horribly mauled and in great pain himself, but, like the plucky chap he was, he only remarked that I seemed *to be running a casualty clearing station*.

There was no more sleep for anyone that night; my men, all crouching around the fires, discussed this new business that had befallen us. "That's no leopard," I said; "that must be an old lion," and though they agreed with me, I could see they did not believe it was so; and indeed it was proved to be a leopard when daylight came. A lion, too, would certainly have killed all three men if he had seized them in such a manner by the head, and, in the first instance, he would no doubt have taken his prey clean away into the bush. More dangerous than the lion in cunning and daring fierceness, the leopard luckily has not the terrible punishing powers and strength of the bigger cat.





THE VERY NEXT NIGHT IT KILLED A WOMAN.

I could hear one of my men, formerly an old German askari, telling the others that "that was no leopard; that is a Shensi who has got some medicine." These people implicitly believe that the man-eating lion or leopard is a native in disguise, who has turned into the African equivalent of our werwolf. They say that the ordinary bush lion is a lion right enough, but that the man-eater is a man temporarily transformed. Often afterwards I discussed this with my Makua boy, Moosa, and others, and they seemed most interested when I suggested to them the melting down of some rupees to make silver bullets as the only sort to prove effective against these Walk-o'-Nights.

Next morning at daylight Henocksberg was sent back on a rough stretcher with eight porters and some askaris, whose orders were to impress as extra bearers every Shensi they could catch, and to hasten by forced marches north to Muiriti boma, about five days away. At that place a large Portuguese camp had been made, and a doctor might be found there. I heard months later, with great delight, that Henocksberg made a wonderful recovery.

As for that cursed leopard, the very next night it killed a woman in the nearest village only six miles away. From the local people I learnt a good deal of the history of this particular beast—the most daring man-eater I have ever heard of. It began killing people on the Msalu river before

the war, and in latter years had made its headquarters in the Nicoque district, where the big granite hills, covered with boulders and scrub, made a series of impenetrable retreats. Its victims must be estimated during these years as running well into three figures, mostly women and children. No wonder the natives were afraid to stir out of their huts at night, or even to go anywhere alone in the daytime. To travel after nightfall through the Nicoque district was indeed in those days to walk through "the valley of the shadow of death"—Death, spotted and whiskered, stalking its victims on those silent pads of velvet, with glaring eyes and swishing tail.

Trouble, as usual, was not to come singly; in the morning, two days after my injured companion had been sent away, the enemy rushed our camp, the local natives having led a party of the 11th and 17th Companies, with two maxims, through the bush from Mweri, guiding them through our three pickets. We were nearly caught, but just escaped in time, thanks to getting a few seconds' warning; for the enemy, for some reason, began the attack in a rather spectacular manner by blowing bugles and opening fire from the two machine guns. We put up a very poor show, and lost all our camp and belongings—everything, in fact, except our rifles and bandoliers. Luckily, all my askaris got away, and the enemy captured only one old, sick porter. In the scramble and confusion in the bush we managed to take a



BRINGING IN THE SPOILS.



AN AFRICAN BEAUTY.



prisoner, one of the 17th Company askaris, and a very useful capture he proved from an Intelligence point of view. This affair is a good example of the "ups and downs" of a scout's life. At 7 a.m., monarch of all one surveys in one's own little camp; at 7.15 a.m. tearing through the bush like a fugitive from justice, and wondering if one will be lucky enough to get some *ugare* (native porridge) by evening.

The principal native against us was a certain Jumbe Nabom, who, from his village about twenty miles away, had personally led the enemy into our camp. We "reorganised" back in the bush for a few days, i.e. got together some loads of rice and other native food, and I started housekeeping afresh with an earthenware pot, two native grass mats, and a calabash of honey. Then, after sending half a dozen sick or sorry askaris back to Muiriti with the prisoner, we set off south again through the bush, with an unwilling but well-watched Shensi guide, to see if we could not return our friend Nabom's visit, and with the full inclination of hanging him in his own village if he was at home. Finding signs of a German picket there, however, and my men being still a bit scared over the last business, I thought it better to postpone the visit for a more suitable occasion.

We then worked round the enemy's district, and found the natives decidedly unfriendly. It rained heavily, and in nine days' time, not far from

the coast, we joined up with Colonel Rose's column which had lately left Pemba. There, to my pleasure, I met Lewis, who had just returned from a trip to Australia on sick leave, and I revelled in comfort after the fortnight or more of nigger food and no stores. At such times we undoubtedly learn to appreciate the common, homely things—soap, a towel, a spoon, and a blanket, for instance—and to enjoy to the full the luxury of a looking-glass, nail-scissors, and a tooth-brush.

From Ankuabi I had to go straight away down to Pemba (called by the Portuguese Port Amelia), to report to the Commander-in-Chief and General Sheppard, who were there at that time on an auxiliary cruiser. I by no means underestimated what was likely to be before us in this new campaign in Portuguese E.A., for I told the Chief of the Staff that though it might appear a very small German force that had come across the Rovuma, yet I felt sure it would prove a very strong one and very troublesome.

CHAPTER IX

A FRESH START

AFTER getting some new equipment for my askaris and porters and trying to get some sort of fresh kit (precious little could I get) to replace all I had lately lost, we marched back again to Ankuabi, where the column was still halted—for the rains now made all transport from Pemba very difficult—waiting to push on to Meja, another Portuguese boma previously taken and burnt by the Germans, whose advanced post was now quartered there. I started a day and a half ahead of the column with my party of I.D. askaris, and my orders were to go round through the bush and cut the main road west, behind Meja, and leading back to the main German force facing the Pemba Column, then known as "Pamforce." We hoped to pick up something if the enemy retired that way from our main force. Lewis went with the advance guard of the main column, which was mostly comprised of the Gold Coast Regiment. On the fourth morning we reached the road behind Meja, and on that day the Gold Coast troops, if all had gone well, should have been close at hand

hunting out of Meja what enemy force remained there.

We took up a position by the side of the road, but it was hard to find a really satisfactory spot for an ambush—it is always advisable to have a reasonable chance of escape in these entertainments in case something rather bigger than is expected comes along. We did no good that day. During the afternoon one solitary German askari came striding along the road fearing no evil, and coming quite close up to me. Hoping, of course, to take him prisoner for information, and whispering to the twelve askaris with me not to shoot, I spoke to him suddenly when he was nearly opposite me. The man stopped dead, hearing the voice, but still not locating me. Again I said, "*Emanie tupa bunduki*" ("Hands up, drop your rifle"), and then, like a buck, he vanished, tearing off into the bush. Of course, we all shot at him, and of course all missed, for he got clean away. Whether he was just an odd man, or the advance scout of a little party following, I do not know. Anyway, I had made a mess of things, and all that remained was to curse long and heartily. Not but that the plucky fellow well deserved his escape.

Of course, all this noise had queered our pitch as far as the road was concerned, and the only thing to be done was to start back through the bush towards Meja and get a decent, quiet camp, away off the road, where we could cook our day's

food. When we picked up our little mob of porters, whom we had placed in some thick bush a few hundred yards off, I found that two of them had bolted on hearing the firing; the very fact of hearing shots had been quite sufficient for them to imagine the worst, and they evidently were taking no chances.

Next day we reached Meja, where the column had just arrived, the advance guard having had a little opposition here and there along the road from some four whites and forty askaris with a couple of machine guns. We had a spell of some days with the column at Meja, during which time my two runaways found their way back to camp. As I always disliked very much the flogging of my own natives, especially porters, for anything except stealing (an offence, by the way, which they never committed), it was a case of how to make the punishment fit the crime. Eventually I ordered the two delinquents to stand on boxes in a prominent position for half an hour, each with a large pumpkin on his head; a performance which naturally entailed no small amount of ridicule.

At this time the main force of the enemy confronting our "Pamforce" column was six companies under Kohl, that fine soldier, each company having two maxims. Of these companies, four were in and around Mweri boma some forty-five miles away. (This place was wrongly called Medo by us, Medo being the name of the

whole of that large district.) The other two companies were probably split up into advanced posts towards Meja, and into flanking pickets and patrols. Von Lettow himself with the greater part of his force was about Nanungu, some ninety miles from Meja, with outposts still farther west, towards Mahua. The enemy were thus spread over a considerable area, with the native population in general entirely favourable to them.

On March 10 Lewis and I left the column at Meja, taking with us forty I.D. askaris, twenty-five of whom, at least, were new men and unknown to us. Our plans were to work round between Mweri and the Msalu river, and to cut the two barabaras from Maria to the Lujenda and from Maria to Nanungu—well behind Mweri. We hoped to capture some messengers or enemy askaris on these roads, to do some raiding if possible, and generally to find out all we could of what was happening behind Mweri, and what was going on between Kohl's and Von Lettow's forces. They were just the orders to delight the heart of an Intelligence man. The main difficulty before us was that, in our passage through old Nabom's district, we should probably find the natives, as proved by their behaviour in January, to be entirely favourable to the Germans. It was almost impossible to pass by these villages without the news being at once taken to the enemy. As a Dutch Intelligence man put it, "As

soon as you come to a village, then *someone is running.*"

We decided that the best plan would be to make a surprise visit to Nabom himself. If we caught him, then he should be made an example of for that January business, for the encouragement of all other native spies.

On the fifth evening out we surrounded Jumbe Nabom's house, or rather huts, at dusk ; but the bird, having no doubt had warning, was flown. Pushing on from there, we burned a small supply store of the enemy's outside Mweri. We knew, of course, that the enemy would by now have certainly got wind of us.

Hearing of a German post away to our right near the Msalu, we waited a few hours on the road to Mweri, and picked up a couple of their notes. One of the messengers we caught had, curiously enough, in his skin bag my bunch of keys, lost in my camp when it was taken by the Germans in January. I greatly rejoiced at recovering them, for they fitted some spare trunks and boxes left at Mombassa. However, the enemy got them once more a few days later, and no second prisoner's bag ever disgorged them again. We had great difficulty in obtaining guides ; the two men of old Kisimo's, one a Jumbe, who had followed me round to our column in January, became too frightened to go any farther with us, and were therefore useless.

Ten days out from Meja, on the morning of

the 22nd, we had to go back a short way on our own track to try and find another way round ; it was rough country, and we ran into a party of the enemy whom the natives had brought and were guiding along our tracks. The country was pretty thick with patches of bamboo, and both sides could hear their opponents farther than they could see them. I could hear quite distinctly the German whites talking rapidly together. When the firing started, a large number of our askaris at once slipped away to the rear ; in fact they bolted, and, seeing them run, all our thirty porters, of course, threw down their loads and also ran into the bush. Thirteen askaris, however, stuck to Lewis and myself, and to save ourselves from being surrounded, we also were soon obliged to retreat. As we retired we had the pleasure of seeing our abandoned loads scattered here and there through the bush.

It was not exactly a bright episode, especially as I doubt if the enemy were more than a small force—perhaps three or four whites and forty askaris, judging by the size of the camps we saw some weeks later. The only two men who came out with flying colours were our two “personal boys” : Lewis’s boy “Hammond,” when the porters started to clear, pounced on two who had loads of Lewis’s, one a roll of blankets and the other his tin box, and actually bullied them into sticking to their loads and to following him when he too made off into the bush ; and as he luckily

took the right direction (northwards to the Msalu), Lewis recovered these two loads of his some days later. (As the tin box contained a precious bottle of Bovril and 5 lb. of sugar, this recovery was of no small importance.) My boy, a little Makua Shensi named "Moosa," whom I had obtained in Pemba, and who could not speak a single word of Swahili when he first came to me, also did well, running to me and giving me my rifle when the firing started and stopping with me throughout ; whereas my askari orderly, with my spare bandolier of cartridges, disappeared at the start.

Finally, with our thirteen askaris, we set off northwards to the Msalu river, reaching there late in the afternoon and in the rain. We counted on finding most of the missing members of our broken *safari* along the river, and counted rightly as far as the askaris and eight porters, including Hammond, were concerned. But the main body of porters on bolting had gone to the left and southwards, and, minus two (whom the local natives tomahawked, killing one, and taking the other to the Germans), eventually reached our column, where, of course, in true negro fashion, they gave a highly imaginative account of the whole affair. All they had heard was some shooting, and all they had seen was some askaris running past them, but they were able, nevertheless, to give to the column Intelligence Officer the following account, and

perhaps by that time had come to believe it themselves :

“ We heard tremendous firing. There were great numbers of Germani ; we *saw* them ourselves ! The two Bwanas were completely surrounded and fighting when we left ; they *must* both have been killed or captured. The Germani chased me for miles, when I finally just had to drop my load and escape.”

As we worked down the Msalu river we began to pick up stragglers, but we could not find any villages or get any food on our side of the river. There were villages on the other side, but the river, being in high flood, we could not get over. Lewis, Moosa, and Abdulla, the I.D. corporal, swam to a *shamba* on the second day, and, having made a raft, piled it with green mealies and pumpkins. But the current was too strong when they tried to get back, and the raft, laden with these good things, gradually beat them, to be swept hopelessly away, accompanied by many groans of disappointment from our side, groans that came straight from our hungry stomachs. The current was really so strong that I was glad to see Lewis and the men get back safely, even without the raft. We had no food whatever for the first two days, and consequently were hungry.

At noon on the third day we struck two mongopla trees with heaps of fruit on them. These trees were new to me, and I never saw any others, though Moosa said they were fairly common on

the high stony ridges in that country. The fruit was something like a fig, but it dyed one's fingers a mulberry colour. In the afternoon of that third day we discovered a native track, and, following it up, arrived later at a village, and there we all had a great feed of green mealies. Next morning we crossed the Msalu in native bark canoes and then took stock of our position. The main part of the village was on our side of the river, and here enough good food could be obtained for all my party.

I used to think that the nigger ate more than the white man, but now I am convinced that the former really eats, and needs, considerably less as a daily business ; though when very hungry no doubt he can get through a larger amount of food—especially meat. Probably he would consider this to be getting even with his "back rations." The pleasures of the table are regarded differently by white and black. The white man finds satisfaction and enjoyment in the actual eating, whilst his black brother appears to eat rather for the sake of that feeling of fullness and contentment that follows a meal.

In taking stock of our position we found we had now collected thirty-eight out of the original forty askaris ; the two unaccounted for, we afterwards heard, returned safely to the main column, and altogether it had been a bloodless battle.

With nothing but a blanket each, and rifles and bandoliers (Lewis also had about forty rupees in

Portuguese notes, not very acceptable payment in that part of the country), we decided to follow up the river along the north bank for some days, and then recrossing, to go south, as originally intended, to the enemy's communications between Mweri and Nanungu. We thought it likely that after dispersing us in that fashion, and annexing all our baggage—not that we had much of value, our cooking-pots being the worst loss—the enemy would take it for granted that we had gone straight back to our column. This idea and the flooded river should give us a better chance than ever, it seemed, of arriving at our planned destination without the enemy being warned of our movements. Of course, this plan involved a long spell of native food in native style, but we could not starve, and I had for companions men no daintier than myself.

No sooner, however, had we started up the river in a south-west direction, that is, back towards the enemy zone, than a fresh trouble overtook us. Our askaris began to desert us daily, mostly from the rear-guard, and in twos and threes. In the course of a week no less than fourteen had left us, and it was impossible either to prevent these desertions or retake any of the deserters, even had they been worth the delay. Moosa's home was not far off up the river, and, luckily, he knew something of the district, for the guides, as usual, bolted if left for a second unguarded. For several days we went through

a district devoid of inhabitants, though we were close to the river and the land was fairly fertile. We passed by an old deserted Portuguese fort at Dmpati, apparently abandoned seven or eight years ago. We saw the remains also of old villages and the charred stakes of high poles that once formed small stockades. According to Moosa, all this district was formerly well populated (the Portuguese seldom build a boma unless the neighbourhood is populous), but had been forsaken of late years simply through fear of the lions. These daring beasts had taken such a toll from the villages that the natives had abandoned the district *en masse*.

After following the river for a week, and being then about a day from Quigeia, we came upon a village where the Portuguese had a post (Msolu boma) before the Germans arrived on the scene. Finding there a couple of small bark canoes, we decided to recross the river and go south, but it was necessary to wait a few days first while Corporal Abdulla went to some villages higher up to procure a supply of native flour for the trip. While we were waiting, one of our askaris, a man with a most villainous squint, who afterwards deserted, managed to shoot a big water-buck. How he did it I cannot imagine ; perhaps it was because of his squint, the bullet hitting the mark when his cross-eyed sight aimed elsewhere. Squint or no squint, the meat was mighty acceptable.

It was during that halt that a most magnificent

young savage, a Yao, came into the camp and was introduced by Moosa, now close at home. This Yao was not less than six feet three or four, and was remarkably strong, powerfully built, and perfectly proportioned. I tried hard, through Moosa, to get him to come with me for a trip, hoping to make a sort of personal porter of him, and thereby have someone to carry me over the innumerable little creeks and wet gullies, but he was too shy. Moosa now heard that his father had recently been killed by a lion: I cannot say I noticed any decrease in his usual high spirits after receipt of the news. Abdulla having returned with some bags of uraisi, a reddish-coloured native flour, we started next morning to recross the Msalu, which, though lower, was still in flood. It was not an encouraging start, for six more askaris, evidently not liking the idea of re-entering the enemy's country, deserted, disappearing together in a mealie patch. Lewis, too, had begun to develop fever, which was not improved by crossing the river in the hot sun.

After some trouble we obtained two guides, and in the afternoon set out southwards through the bush. At the first halt my little lance-corporal, Kufakwenda, a most reliable little Mnyanwesi, who had been with me all the time from German East, came running up from the rear to report still more desertions: the rear-guard of three askaris had again deserted and disappeared. It turned out that these three, joining up with the six who

had bolted that morning, actually went back overland to Dar-es-Salaam, where they sneaked into the I.D. Depot camp, hoping to be lost amongst the other askaris, who, of course, would not have given them away. Unfortunately for them, however, Lewis himself happened to be at the depot, on his way back to the front from hospital, and, recognising them, had them arrested. Subsequently they were court-martialled and convicted at Pemba.

We were now reduced to fifteen askaris, practically the same men who had stuck to us at Mtupwa Hill, when the Germans previously attacked us. Luckily the goats had now finished drafting themselves from the sheep, and the fifteen remaining men were a decent lot ; all of whom, less those who were lost through sickness and other accidents, I retained from then onwards till the final wind-up in P.E.A. Lewis's fever being no better, I had to leave him with Kufakwenda and a few askaris to camp in the bush, while I took a short trip farther south on the Maria-Lugenda road. No signs of an enemy movement northwards could be detected, and on return I found Lewis worse. As all our medical stores had been lost at Mtupwa, and we had nothing for the sick man except native food and the one treasured bottle of Bovril, I decided to begin moving back in the direction of our column. Lewis was now so weak that it was necessary to make a rough hammock and get him carried.

During our return journey, though we avoided all villages as far as possible, we went through one ruled by a *Jumbe bibi* (a woman headman). I am no believer in women's franchise, but I must own that the village was far tidier and the huts much neater than usual. The Bibi, decidedly handsome, was lighter in colour than most of the inhabitants in that region—owing no doubt to some strain of Arab blood. She was, too, most friendly to us, the first Englishmen, probably, that she had ever seen, and showed us the way herself for one long day's march. I wished, when she left us next day, there had been some little trinket that I could have given her for a present.

As we began to work round Mweri again on our way home, it became more necessary than ever to be careful, especially with one of us sick and being carried. It happened, and we could tell from the guns that there was fighting, that we were very close to Mweri on the day our Pemba column drove the enemy from his position there. Kohl's six companies, with the advantage of being in good positions, put up a good fight all the morning, but eventually began to get rather a rough handling and had to fall back towards Maria. Our little party, catching a German askari of the 17th Company, learnt from our prisoner what German pickets in front of us were to be avoided, and thus we got through without any trouble. Three more days later (after a third unsuccessful attempt on the old fox Nabom) saw us at Manumbiri, which

was then well behind the column. Not knowing the result of the fighting at Mweri, we were frightened to cut in too high for fear the column might have had a check.

It was just five weeks since we had started from Meja, and the expedition with its hardships had proved disappointing and unsatisfactory. Not that such reflections prevented us thoroughly enjoying a meal of tea, jam, and biscuits after the long spell on nigger tucker. The doctor at the field hospital collared the expostulating Lewis, who, despite his assertions to the contrary, was really in a high fever. Next morning I went up alone to Mweri by car, where I found, to my disgust, that owing to the alarmist reports of our returned porters, and our delayed return, we had both been officially posted as "missing" some weeks earlier. Lewis was soon sent down to the Pemba hospital, and from that time till the end I worked always by myself.

At Mweri I was just in time to report to the C.I.O., "Pamforce," and to see General Edwards, who took me on the staff, which was hurrying to catch up the troops then pushing ahead towards Maria. "Pamforce" now consisted of two columns, one under Colonel Rose and the second under Colonel Gifford; General Edwards, whom I got to like very much, and whom I always found most considerate, being in charge of the whole force. That evening we were in time to join up with Colonel Rose's column, which had been held

up most of the day by Kohl's rear-guard companies in a very wicked little position amongst thick bamboos, across the Maria road, the fighting lasting till some hours after sundown. Thence into Maria, where Maria himself, the Sultani of all the Medo district natives, came to see us. No doubt Maria previously had done everything possible to help the Germans, but it was a good sign now to see him turning his coat, and I thought it might make our intelligence work a little easier. The former Maria and rightful Sultani had been imprisoned by the Portuguese and interned on Ibo Island some years previously for killing a Portuguese askari: and from what I saw of the Portuguese askaris, I should say the deceased well deserved his fate, if only on general grounds.

At this time, being very destitute, I managed luckily to get a couple of blankets, a few clothes, and, above all, a saucepan and frying-pan from the sale of kit of a recently killed officer; while Moosa was rewarded with a shirt, a pair of shorts, and one of the blankets.

At Maria I had instructions from the General to go across and get into touch with an advanced "Norforce" column, supposed to be then near the Msalu, slightly north-west of Nanungu. It is unnecessary to describe in detail all the subsequent trips, for they much resembled one another. It is sufficient to state that in eight days we reached this Chisona column under a Major Fraser, with whom on the night of arrival I had an hour's talk,

telling him all I knew of the position of things on our side, and getting from him direct his intentions and return messages (I never carried papers or anything of value in the way of information of use against our forces). In the Chisona camp, to my great pleasure, I found an old Queensland friend, now a Rhodesian, Captain Mills, and he and I yarned far into the night.

Leaving at daylight, enriched by a basin and two plates from my good friend Mills, we recrossed the river, and, not knowing where we should find the "Pamforce" column, made a shot at it by first cutting the Maria-Nanungu road about twelve miles from Nanungu. However, we only observed German porter traffic on the road, and, finding an enemy post not far off, we had to work round through the bush for a couple of days, keeping above the road, and out of the way of any enemy rear-guard. At Coronga we found the column hung up for rations, and fully thirty miles farther back than we had at first hoped. Of course, if the native people had been friendly, we could have kept in touch much better; but I had learnt that it was generally better to avoid villages as much as possible, and to be careful the natives did not bolt when they saw us approach the village.

We had now entered a very curious and striking country, a land that would greatly rejoice the heart of a geologist. Stern and mighty granite peaks of various sizes, with smooth domes that

apparently consisted of one huge slippery rock and rose high and clear from the lower block of the mountain, were scattered freely about. To what height some of these awful rocks rise I cannot tell, but it must be many thousand feet, and most of them appear quite inaccessible to any climber. One of the biggest and grandest of them all is the great peak of Mcopa, near Mahua : this we saw for three days before we reached it. Sometimes, when camping below these mountains, I have wondered how far back in time one would have to go before the slightest change in that cold-looking mass would be noticeable. If one could but ask the great peaks, " Were you just as this in the days of Cephren 6,000 years ago ? " the answer could only be, " In the days of Cephren ? Why, that's *now* ! "

From Coronga we went off south, below Nanungu to Mahua, the base of another " Norforce " column which had just left to move in towards Corewa and Nanungu. On the way back " the woods were full of Indians," and we had to be careful, but I did not know till I reached the column near Nanungu that Von Lettow's whole force, after a stiff fight near Corewa, had broken southwest. He had evidently crossed just about a day behind us on our return journey, for we had marked no big enemy track.

After a day's spell we were off again, this time on the enemy's left, to watch for any sign of the enemy working out or sending detachments

from that side. My boy Moosa had to be left in hospital with a sore leg: like all native-born Africans, he had picked up Swahili wonderfully quickly, and I now used him as my main interpreter, the local people in this part speaking only Makua, their own language.

Troubles never come singly, and my cook-porter, an amazing coward, now asked me to let him go into the Carrier Corps, having evidently had quite enough of being with a "Bwana-ya-Scoutie" (Intelligence Officer). Luckily, there were several recently captured German askaris in the camp at that time, and I secured one, a youth of about fifteen. He informed me that his name was Tōmaas (Thomas), and that he was a Christo (Christian): a very good, quiet boy he turned out to be—though he was never as bright and quick as Moosa—and I kept him with me right to the finish. Tōmaas, the Christo, and Moosa, the Makuan heathen, would have been a dangerous combination if both of them had not been very honest youngsters; but, as a matter of fact, I have always found native Africans honest except when spoilt by town civilisation.

Moosa eventually caught me up a couple of weeks later. He had done well in following me so speedily on his own, though, of course, as a Makua, he was travelling amongst his own people the whole way. My little Mnyamwezi corporal, Kufakwenda ("Go-to-kill"), whom I had to leave behind with toothache, never rejoined me,

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and his absence was a great loss. One of the worst features about our work was that the leaving behind of a good askari whom one may have had for a considerable time, usually meant his non-return ; probably he would be drafted into someone else's party. " One man, one boss," is a good rule, especially with the men of these African tribes.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST PHASE

THE German force had now broken south-west towards Malema, crossing the Luiyanna and the bigger Luli, and at first travelling fairly well together. It was followed by Colonel Gifford's column (K.A.R. 2nd Col.). My little party crossed some miles lower than the enemy, and we could get neither guides nor information from the ill-conditioned inhabitants.

Four days after crossing the river Luli we were in wild and broken country apparently unpopulated. There must have been a fair amount of game in certain parts, though on account of the long grass we seldom saw it. One morning, about an hour before dawn, two or more lions came down to drink at the little creek by the side of which we had camped, perhaps eighty yards away. An uneasy stirring and rustling in the camp, made by the sleepers half-waking and turning in their blankets preparatory for a final snooze, generally betokens the approach of daybreak.

Suddenly, with the roar of the lions, I could feel the whole camp instinctively stiffen silently, and I remembered the remark of an old Dutch

hunter: "When the lion roars, every beast in the veld must stand still and the natives too must hold their breath." These lions continued roaring close by till the first sign of the coming light. I tried the old joke, "Moosa, fetch me some water." No answer. "Moosa, fetch me some water from the creek." (The askaris and porters now begin to titter.) "Do you not hear, Moosa?" At last a small answer, "Bwana ngopa simba" (Master, I fear the lions).

Not far from the camp we passed the lions' kill, a young wild sow, the head of which—and that was mostly death grin—alone remained amongst the trampled and stained grass. Alas! poor piggy, she must have made just some little slip in her watchfulness, perhaps rooting just a trifle too greedily, and then in a flash the great cats had her. I doubt, however, if even a couple of lions, much less a single one, are keen on tackling a real old man boar, whose long sharp tusks (you can see the shining ivories sometimes 100 yards off) make him particularly dangerous to such soft-skinned enemies. Besides, when bailed up, no braver fellow walks the bush than "Billy the Boar."

Near the main Malema-Mozambique road we came into K.A.R. 2nd Column, and thence onwards I was working under Colonel Gifford, a splendid chief. This column of his can well be said to have been the one bright feature of the Portuguese campaign on our side. It certainly bore the

brunt of the fighting, it always gave a good account of itself, and it never suffered any kind of a reverse : no mean record for troops measured against Von Lettow's four-year-old veterans. The column at first consisted of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 2nd K.A.R. Regiment, and later the 3rd Battalion of the same regiment also. Quite young, tall, strong, and straight, with a handsome and taking personality, Colonel Gifford himself, an efficient and tireless soldier, expected his officers and men to be the same. Cool and collected in any engagement, he was, as I have said, with his column, our one redeeming feature in this 1918 campaign in P.E.A. This campaign can hardly be considered either fortunate or creditable, but without Colonel Gifford and the K.A.R. 2nd Col. it might easily have been almost disastrous. The Colonel, whilst I served under him, payed me the best of all compliments—he worked me hard.

The German force, still going south ahead of us, was now spreading its companies more widely and over a bigger area. Müller, another fine soldier, who appeared to be generally in the advance with our old friend Kohl, had, as usual, the rather unthankful job of holding off our forces with little rear-guard actions. The Portuguese bomas of Moloque, Ille, Majema, Lugerra, and many other places fell before them like ninepins, in most cases being abandoned well beforehand by the Portuguese. If not abandoned, a few shots

and the Germans quickly had them. Some of these bomas, and this was the serious part for us, yielded considerable quantities of food, cloth, and other useful booty. And this was the "Opera War," this campaign of 1918!

After joining Colonel Gifford, for the first few weeks I was out between K.A.R. 2nd Col. and the nearest "Norforce" column; afterwards we were generally out some way from the column on one side or the other, seeing our troops only occasionally and at intervals, sometimes of several weeks. Great prudence marked our methods. My porters and askaris had now been trained to walk through the bush in silence, and to keep a strict quiet in our camps at night—no small trial, for the jolly sociable negro dearly loves noise and talk. However, by this time, having had a few good frights, he had begun to see the wisdom of this camping and travelling quietly.

Moving at the first sign of light, we were generally camped during four or five hours of the day, if possible, in some fairly thick bush, leaving a little picket of two or three askaris watching some way back on our spoor. During this halt all our cooking and eating for the day would be done, and, moving off again in the afternoon, we would camp just at dark in some quiet spot in the bush away from any track or road. Of course we had no fires at night, and only on rare occasions, such as when holding prisoners, did I ever have a guard at night, thus saving my few askaris. I

never allowed a Shensi who had come into my camp to leave it till we ourselves were on the move. If any natives happened to be with us when we made camp for the night, they had to stay with us and could only return to their village next morning.

Some time previously one of the "Norforce" Intelligence officers had been killed by the inhabitants of this Malema district. The natives guided a party of the enemy and surprised him in his camp; though severely wounded, he managed with a couple of his askaris, also wounded, to escape from the Germans into the bush; but the local natives, following up his spoor, speared him and his two men to death.

My kit and worldly goods did not in those days amount to very much—not more than four loads—and I had no tent or stretcher. My boys always cut a bundle of grass for my bed each night. Food we were never really short of, and we could generally buy it with the cloth (Americani) issued to us for this purpose. We could, too, nearly always obtain *mohogo* in the villages, even though the owners had been frightened away from the place. This *mohogo* is a kind of arrowroot, and, if nicely baked, or, better still, fried in fat, closely resembles our English potatoes. The quality varies a good deal according to the soil in which it is grown, the best being got in light, but good red loam. Towards the end I became quite an expert in cooking this food.

The German force went as far south as Namacurra, about fifty miles only from Quelimane and within a few days' march of the Zambezi. There, after scattering and taking two guns from a considerable Portuguese force, they attacked and badly cut up an advanced part of one of our K.A.R. battalions. It may be of interest to mention that the fighting at Namacurra was the best part of 1,000 miles away from Dar-es-Salaam, the headquarters of our Commander-in-Chief. In this district the Germans obtained a great quantity of European supplies from the Portuguese, and much loot in the way of cloth, etc., from the local stores. I believe the German whites had a tremendous spree with the captured Portuguese wine and other liquors, while their askaris collected a considerable number of "bibis" (women), the very essence and cream of all booty for black soldiers. Nor were these women altogether such a handicap to their force as might be imagined, for all, acting as extra porters, carried loads of loot and food for their masters, besides cooking their food.

From Namacurra the enemy next turned sharply east or rather north-east, a threat to our communications on the Mozambique side. Again he hit us hard at Namirrue, where he had apparently surprised and surrounded, on a little rocky hill just above the Portuguese boma, a small force of ours that included some Gold Coast M.I. I doubt if in the whole campaign the German

general showed anywhere to better advantage than in this region. This little band of ours on the hill, though without any water except such as it had carried up, put up a brave and determined defence. It meant heavy losses, which the Germans could not afford, to attempt to storm the place without artillery, and a column of two battalions of K.A.R. under Colonel Fitzgerald was advancing down the Namirrue river towards the boma from the north, while Colonel Gifford was only a couple of days off attacking from the west.

Von Lettow as usual acted coolly and promptly. He left just enough companies to hold up and delay Colonel Gifford's force with a series of rear-guard actions in suitable positions, and while still keeping his grip around the force on the hill, attacked with his main force the column under Colonel Fitzgerald, then only a few miles away. The advanced battalion of K.A.R. was driven off, with the loss of some of their Stokes guns and maxims, and numerous casualties, and in spite of the efforts of the second battalion the column had to retire.

Returning and using the unexpected weapon of the newly captured Stokes gun against the little force on the hill, the Germans captured that position also. Then after burning the boma buildings according to custom, the enemy retired farther east before Colonel Gifford's troops, and halted at Chaluwe, a large Portuguese post. As the enemy

forces probably needed a good rest, they rested in the calmest fashion for some ten days, apparently taking but little notice of the movements of our columns in the neighbourhood. Their askaris undoubtedly were in great spirits over their recent run of successes.

With a few askaris I had gone from Namarve towards the boma at Salapa, between K.A.R. 2nd Col., who were keeping somewhat north, and the German force; and when near the boma at Salapa I heard from some natives, who, mistaking me for a German, were most friendly, that the boma had been hurriedly abandoned by the Portuguese, but that as yet no Germans had been there to loot and burn it. Eureka! I thought at last we have found what we always dreamt of, a boma, abandoned by the Portuguese, but missed by the Germans. Visions of a fine set of cooking-pots, perhaps some chest of drawers full of clothes, or something good in the tucker line from the pantry, were conjured up; perhaps a well-stocked vegetable garden. My askaris and porters, as well as myself, were pretty ragged just then, for I had only a little time before again lost half of such belongings as I had at Namirrue, where we had got into a little trouble the day before K.A.R. 2nd Col. came up. A crowd of willing natives soon collected to guide me to Salapa, no doubt hoping to indulge in the joy of seeing their hated Bastille go up in flames.

Selecting two as guides and driving the others

away, we went as far as the usual clearing around the boma, reaching this just at dark. We decided to camp quietly in the bush for the night, and at dawn work round to where the bush came nearest to the buildings, and then it-all was clear to go in and see what was to be found. At dawn next morning, full of hope as to what we might find in our ally's abandoned post, we approached the edge of the bush surrounding it, when, to our utter disgust, we suddenly noticed little tongues of flame leaping simultaneously from every corner of the various buildings. The askaris and myself regarded each other with blank faces, "Madachi!" (Germans). We had been beaten on the post; four whites and about thirty or forty askaris of the enemy, evidently encamped, like ourselves, somewhere close to the boma, had entered it in the early morning.

After sending back two of my askaris with a note to the column, which I guessed was only about a day away to the north, and thinking this might prove to be just the advance party of the whole of the enemy's force, there was nothing else to be done but to retire a little way into the bush and await further developments. I quote an entry in my notebook for that day:

10 a.m.: Germans burning *my* boma.

Supplies: One tin of bully beef and *mohogo*; no fat; no letters for three months, and shirt as usual under strong suspicions.

The Germans, as I have mentioned, had made their headquarters at Chaluwe, taking scant notice of the column moving around them; but I have no doubt they had plenty of natives watching and reporting on all our movements. The people about there were particularly enthusiastic towards the enemy forces, providing them with abundance of food, for which the Germans paid in captured Portuguese cloth.

After our columns had moved eastwards, it being apparently taken for granted that Von Lettow's next move would be either towards Mozambique and our main communications, or towards Barapata (Antonio Annes) on the coast, the German leader quickly marched straight back in a north-westerly direction without meeting any opposition. Continuing in the same direction, he repassed near the big boma of Ille, sacked and destroyed by his men on the trip down, and still pushing on, attacked and drove our troops out of their position at Nammeroe. A peculiar and unlucky similarity of names marks the three places where we had these reverses. On receipt of the news that the enemy had broken back, Colonel Gifford acted promptly, marching his force by long stages to Alto Moloque, and keeping a line north of the enemy's route. I had again picked up the column, and now had instructions to work across, keeping more to the south of the column. This would enable me to cut, farther on, all the different valleys running north towards the Inagu

Mountains and the Upper Luli, and up any one of these valleys the Germans might perhaps turn.

In some ways this was the pleasantest, if the least eventful, trip that I had. The country was very high, the creeks being mostly the heads of the Malema river, and the climate delightful, with really cold nights. As we had only one blanket each, we were all only too glad to try and find, when possible, long grass to camp in at night. The country was mostly red volcanic soil, very fertile and full of villages; the twinkling fires of these villages at night, and their smoke in the day, could be seen all around on the steep hillsides. I imagine that Europeans, as far as the climate is concerned, could live and thrive quite well in this particular district. Great peaks arose everywhere, some of them, especially the huge granite mass of Namuli, on whose slopes we camped one night, being most awe-inspiring. The inhabitants too in these parts were quite friendly, and it would seem that just around that part they had been less harried by the Portuguese and their hateful police askaris, who, great hands indeed at rape, pillage, and murder amongst the poor Shensis, proved completely useless and cowardly when it came to anything in the way of fighting. This district had not been in any way touched by the enemy up to this time.

After the affair at Nammeroe, the enemy moved up one of the valleys towards a place called Lioma, travelling now nearly due north, and there

Colonel Gifford's column, which had continued travelling fast through Inagu, arrived and attacked. It was only his own skill and the disciplined courage of his veteran troops that saved the German general from complete disaster, for several "Norforce" battalions also reinforced the attackers. I doubt if Von Lettow was ever in a tighter corner. As it was, he lost about twenty of his irreplaceable whites, killed and wounded in the fight, and probably not far short of 200 askaris; he also had to abandon a good deal of his baggage, and, best of all (for us), a good many loads of his ammunition. Our losses, too, were considerable, but we had at last scored a distinct success.

Breaking north again, the Germans crossed the Luli once more, Colonel Gifford still closely following, and a force of those fine N.R.P. troops close at hand. A day north of the big river the Germans, this time themselves taking the offensive, turned and attacked our column. The country was all open forest, and along the creek, where the main fighting took place, there were patches of bamboo. Accordingly, a somewhat confused fight took place during a greater part of the day.

The 2nd/2nd (second battalion of the second regiment) were the first attacked and had the lion's share of the fighting. Lucky in having as O.C. an able and cool soldier in Colonel Greig, who is never more at home than when in action, the

battalion fought steadily and well, the enemy getting precious little change out of them. Meanwhile Colonel Gifford himself, with the other battalions of the column, began to come to their assistance. Finally, the Germans had to draw off in the afternoon, Von Lettow being too good a soldier not to realise that he was up against rather more than he bargained for. He had to leave behind his hospital with wounded, which fell into our hands. I am inclined to think that for once his information was badly out when he made this attack; possibly he thought it was a different column of perhaps less steady and experienced troops. As it was he had gained nothing by the day's fighting, whilst again having casualties amongst both his whites and blacks that he could ill afford.

Thus the tireless care and energy and soldierly qualities of K.A.R. 2nd Col.'s leader had twice borne good fruit. An I.D. man has no regiment, and therefore should not be considered prejudiced in believing that the Colonel, young as he was, showed himself head and shoulders above all other Column Commanders of ours in the P.E.A. campaign. It is rumoured that the intention is to reduce the K.A.R. to eight battalions of picked men, and that Colonel Gifford may perhaps be the future head of this force. It is to be hoped so, for, if true, there will eventually be no finer regiments in Africa.

This was the last fighting in P.E.A., for after

their unsuccessful attack, the Germans continued to march rapidly northwards, crossing the Lugenda river, and later the Rovuma again, to the south-west of Songea—thus passing through the extreme south-west of their old colony of German East, and out of that again into Rhodesian territory. There the Armistice, following the complete collapse of Germany and her allies, found them, and one of the clauses of the Armistice necessitated their surrender. It is only fair to acknowledge that the end of the war found Von Lettow himself and his little force still unconquered.

The lion hunt was at an end.

At the camp on the Luli a telegram was received from my chief, saying that there were now at Pemba, under arrest, seventeen of the twenty-three I.D. askaris who had deserted in such a cowardly manner from Lewis and myself on the Msala river in March. These men were waiting to be court-martialled, and it was necessary that I should come across at once with all other witnesses for the trial. We reached Barama on the "Pamforce" line in nine days, and there got some equipment for my very ragged askaris and porters. Also I got some badly needed shirts and trousers for myself.

Owing to the enemy having gone straight towards German East, many K.A.R. battalions were on the move for Pemba for transhipment to Dar-es-Salaam. Two were in Barama the night we reached there, and the noise of great *ngomas*

(songs) was heard right up to midnight. The words of some of these songs were rather to the point, and after hearing them sung in continual repetition for many hours, I am not sure that I did not begin to recognise some tune in them. Such songs, however, are not conducive to sleep, especially as the musical accompaniment consists of the thumping of innumerable kerosene tins. These are the words of three of their songs, as far as I can roughly interpret the meaning.

SONG I

The K.A.R. askaris
Are fierce in fight;
But go carefully,
There are lions¹ in the bush.

SONG II

The big Bwanas²
Stop away behind,
We others have fighting and hunger—
What kind of business is this?

SONG III

The Portuguese are no good,
When they hear a shot they run;
Nor will they stop
Till they reach the sea.

Leaving the main road to our north to avoid the bustle, dust, and nuisance of other troops going down, and travelling by native tracks, we arrived at Pemba in another nine days. One had heard

¹ Germans.

² Higher rank base wallahs.

at Mologue a month or more earlier, and also at Barama, that we were doing very well in Europe, that the news everywhere was very good, and that we had recently taken a lot of German guns and prisoners. But beyond the ordinary feeling of satisfaction, I paid little more attention to this news now than I had frequently done during the war, when things happened to be looking up for us. That the *big thing* was rapidly nearing to its close I never even suspected.

Still on this final trip, somehow, we all travelled with light hearts. Far from any enemy, I found myself gaily whistling as we marched, or talking to and asking questions on subjects of native interest from my boy Moosa, who, as always, followed next behind me, carrying my rifle. At night the men made as many big fires as they wished, and my Mnyamwezi porters were in great spirits. The twelve of them who had been with me for so long a time were mostly originally German porters, and either had been captured or had deserted to us. Splendid porters—with never the slightest grumble, however long the day or heavy their load—these twelve never seemed to get sick or sorry and never gave the slightest trouble. I was most particular not to allow an askari in any way to order or bully my porters, or to have the slightest thing to do with them regarding their loads; for an askari, if not watched, is inclined to consider himself superior to a common porter, and to try and impose on him. My askaris

were often told that I might manage without *them*, but never without my porters.

Truly the Mnyamwezi porter is a wonderful animal ; there is no other living thing that can carry proportionately as big a load so far and so continuously. I have never altered my opinion that from the earliest days we should have thoroughly organised our unlimited man power of porters, and that if we had put a tenth part of the cost of those expensive, useless, dying live stock, and a tenth part of the cost of those ruinous, column-delaying motors, into providing extra food, clothing, and shelter for porters, more porters, and still more porters, the East African campaign could never have dragged on as it did.

Old Rensberg used to say, " A nigger is a nigger, and he dies a nigger," and I believe he spoke truly. Still, I found much to like, and frequently much of the gentleman, in the raw, untutored native African.

A relative of mine told me that when quite a young nurse in a Western Queensland hospital she had as a patient for some time a great big negro, then dying of consumption, whom they all came to like for his nice and gentlemanly ways ; it was Peter Jackson. Certainly I had become exceedingly attached to these poor loyal pagasi, who had been through so many ups and downs with me.

On the trip down we passed through certain villages where a couple of man-eaters were appar-

ently starting their evil practices, a man having been caught the previous night by lions and carried off a little way into the bush, where he had been eaten, head and hands alone remaining. Still farther on we passed a fresh grave, which the Shensis said was that of another victim.

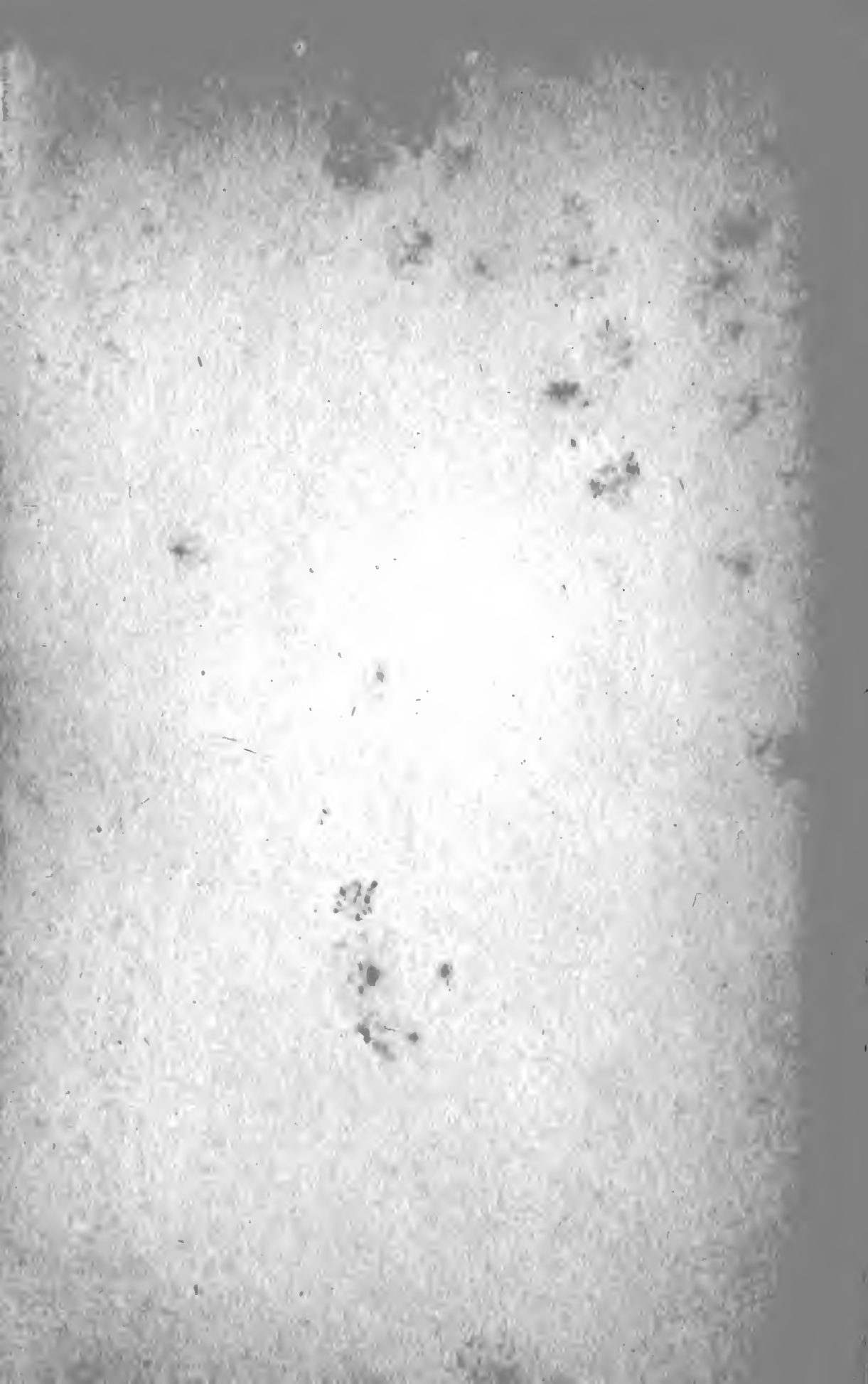
According to local custom, over the little mound of hard-plastered soil forming the grave, a little grass roof was erected, whilst on the grave itself were cloth and new earthenware bowls, the latter, I believe, for beer. I would like to have asked Moosa what was the purpose of these offerings, but I knew he would think I was making fun of him. This was indeed far from my intention, for the white man is on dangerous ground here. I have heard of someone who, noticing a Chinaman putting a bowl of rice on a grave, and asking him, "John, when do you think he will come up to eat that?" got for reply, "Plaps same time your friend come up to smellem flowers."

On the ninth day we reached Pemba, crossing over its big land-locked harbour. At ten o'clock that night the sergeant-major came to the tent with the official news, "Bulgaria has surrendered unconditionally." That night I felt almost afraid to think what this might, probably would, now mean to us all. Then followed in those short intervals the collapse of Turkey, Austria, and Germany!



"HEAD AND HANDS ALONE REMAINING."











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DATE DUE

NOV 27 1987		
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JUL 10 1995		
JUL 03 1995		
JAN 10 1996		
DEC 28 1995		
SEP 08 1999		
APR 07 2006		
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